

Inside: 15 reviews - sexcams exposed! - polygons on strike - beer

# PC Accelerator

games, girls and gags

FRESH THINKING  
FROM THE  
MAKERS OF **PC GAMER**

## CLASS ACTION

GET SCHOOLED BY EXPERTS IN:

### QUAKE III

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

WHEEL OF TIME

### DAIKATANA

PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

## Hot For Teacher!

Queen of Quake and actual Game Designer, Stevie "Killcreek" Case teaches you about DAIKATANA and... other things.

# END OF GAMES

## WE FINISH WHAT YOU STARTED

 **DISC EDITION!**  
MARCH 2000 • NO. 19

**imagine**  
MEDIA WITH PASSION

\$7.99US \$8.99CAN



**Next Generation of 3D Cards Reviewed**  
ATI, Diamond, Creative Labs, Guillemot



A hand holding a futuristic, metallic device with a lens, positioned against a large, faint clock face in the background. The scene is set against a dark, textured background.

Scientists say  
that **time** is a constant.

Critics say  
the same thing  
about our games  
on **3dfx**.

**EIDOS**  
INTERACTIVE  
eidos.com

**3dfx**  
3dfxgamers.com

Go to <http://pcx1.ign.com/gaming411>: Product Number 26

ANACHRONOX



An epic science fiction fantasy RPG with a roller coaster of emotion.

THIEF II  
THE METAL AGE



Sequel to the critically acclaimed stealth title that set a new standard in action gaming.



SOFTWARE RATED

TEEN TO MATURE

For more information on this products rating, visit [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org) or call 1-800-771-3772



LOOKING  
GLASS  
STUDIOS



TM



Classic Romero shooter; fast, furious and bent on destruction. Oh and sidekicks' to boot.



...not just action, but a deeply  
...where choices affect every moment.  
...hing.



Eidos on 3dfx.  
So Powerful, It's Kind of Ridiculous.

FORGOTTEN REALMS

# ICEWIND D.A.L.E.



[www.interplay.com/icewind](http://www.interplay.com/icewind)

Go to <http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411>. Product Number 150

# A Baldur's Gate™ Engine Adventure Into the Spine of the World



In the northernmost reaches of the Forgotten Realms® lies the frozen region known as Icewind Dale. Journey deep into the Spine of the World mountains, a harsh and unforgiving territory teeming with fearsome and merciless beasts. There you must confront an ancient evil that threatens to unleash an unspeakable horror upon the face of Faerûn.



Real-time combat using the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*® game system. Battle Ice Trolls, Giants, and hordes of terrifying Undead – over 70 types of monsters to put your valor to the test.



A wide range of breathtaking environments and beautifully rendered terrain. Explore the region known as Icewind Dale, from magnificent temples, and ancient ruins, to volcanic caverns and icy plains.



**BIOWARE**  
INFINITY ENGINE



Advanced  
**Dungeons & Dragons**



# CONTENTS

MARCH 00

## FEATURES

17

### GAMING IOI

We gathered together a few of the masters of gaming — Tim Willits of Id, Cliffy B from Epic, The John Romero, and most importantly, Stevie "Killcreek" Case, and begged them to commit their gaming knowledge to paper. They obliged, and what they told us is all here. Say goodbye to newbieland and take in these tips from the best of the best



43

### END OF GAMES

Banish the mysteries! Achieve gaming closure! Reclaim lost hard drive space! Prepare yourself for the coming parade of sequels with "The End of Games." The pinnacle of any game is put to the PCXL test as we show you some of the best endings (and ends) in recent memory. You've never seen so many games knocked out at one time!



## DEPARTMENTS



### TECHPHILES 66

We pit PC Outfitters against Future Power to see who's got what it takes, the top four video chipsets square off, and the Razor Boomslang gets his



### PLAY BY PLAY 99

Oliver Stone gets what's coming to him, *Links* reigns supreme, and, is there finally a decent snowboarding game on the PC?



### ONLINE ARENA 102

Where the Games Are — We scoured the servers to find and figure out how we could make online gaming sites more fun. Investigative, immature, and utterly entertaining



### X-TRA 106

Porn Pilot Pro, Women We Love To Play, Gia's back (but you don't get to see her back this month), Sexcams exposed, and a variety of other crap we pulled straight out of our collective asses

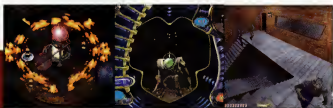




## ON THE COVER

When we first heard the rumors about girls playing Quake and kicking ass, we laughed. But when John Romero got schooled by Stevie "Killcreek" Case in *Quake II* Deathmatch we saw the light. As in "lights, camera, action" for our photo shoot with Ion Storm's level designer and part-time model. Photography by Ric Moore.

## PREVIEWS



### 53 MDK 2

We couldn't get enough of old "Touzin pen head" the first time

### 56 BALDUR'S GATE 2

More characters, more monsters, more spells, more whiny dialog

### 60 THIEF 2

Exciting adventures in the dark, grabbing things that don't belong to us — again!

## REVIEWS



### 72 PLANESCAPE TORMENT

There are seldom any surprises from Black Isle Studios ... it's always great

### 76 TOMB RAIDER: TLR

The Last Revelation or just more of the same? You get one guess ...

### 80 URBAN CHAOS

You too can serve and protect by beating "suspects" to death

### 81 WILD WILD WEST

Reviewing this is like shooting a really quick fish in a barrel



**82 TRICKSTYLE**  
In the future, hoverboarders know all the tricks and have all the style



**83 TEST DRIVE 6**  
Best driving game of 2001 gets updated — it's still no more fun than the original



**84 PRO PINBALL**  
Everything's great except we heard that it sounds like a cheap porno. We wouldn't know for sure



**86 BATTLEZONE 2**  
Turn your back on alien technology for a second, and look what happens



**90 ODJUM**  
Drop retarded NATO mercenaries into Poland and what do you get? Another stupid RPG



**91 STAR TREK HIDDEN EVIL**  
Come on, could any game with a Vulcan nerve pinch be that bad?



**94 DIPLOMACY**  
Old war board game or a boring old wargame?



**95 MEGAWARRIOR 3 PIRATES MOON**  
A short cut that should have been feature length



**96 CRUSADERS**  
All that annoying RPG stuff, who needs it?



**97 ANTIETAM**  
Is Sid Meier's latest any good. Gee, I wonder ...

## COLUMNS

### EDITOR'S LETTER 10

You're probably already feeling a warm sensation all over your body, aren't you? Well, read Mike's latest insane ramblings to see exactly how PCXL is getting even better — we shudder to think

### FIRST PERSON 120

Chuck says "silence is golden," and Rob throws out big words like "stutfulness" in an all-out war of words-over-voice technology. Give it a listen

## THE DISC



12

Notice anything new? Matt and Kyle couldn't leave well enough alone and now look what they've done with it! A whole new interface, more graphics, and more demos and patches!

## Accelerator



## WE'D LIKE TO THANK ALL OF THE LITTLE PEOPLE ...

(and a few hot babes who appear in this list, too) Vain Troyer, Gary Coleman, Kenny Baker, Beatejolina, Joe C., Billy Bari, Harvey Vilarquez, Posidemon, for all of the moments of joy and laughter they have provided. And some of their full-sized partners in celebrity fun: Linda Tripp, Colonel Sanders, Laertica Cassa, Anna Kosminikova, Catherine Zeta-Jones, John Rocha, Oprah Winfrey, Jeremy of Jeremycam, Tiffany of Tiffanycam, Larry Flynt, Gwyneth Paltrow. And we'd be remiss if we didn't mention Black Star bear. The sweet yellow substance flows oh so sweetly down our parched throats. We only have one request. We want more! It won't go to waste. Thank you and good night.

# UNREAL™ TOURNAMENT™

✦ All-new and enhanced big body-count weaponry - the Redeemer, the IMPACT Hammer and more.

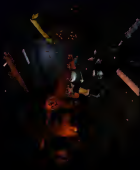
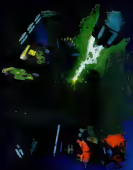
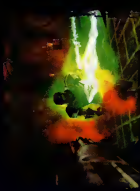
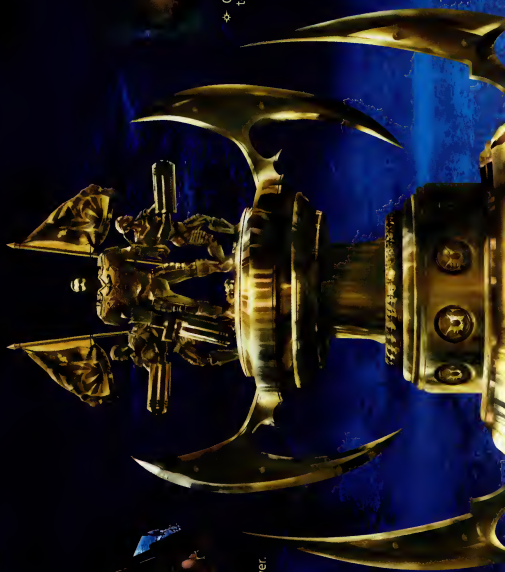
✦ The most complete and challenging online multi-player experience ever.

✦ A single-player experience like no other - Guide your team to the title of Unreal Grand Master!

✦ Train for combat in Novice mode. Or go Hardcore for even more intense action.

✦ Over 30 unique environments torqued by the Unreal engine.

✦ Completely customizable "bots" with superior A.I. - "bots" take orders and team up with you.



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[LOGS NOT REQUIRE UNREAL TO PLAY]

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WITH AND AGAINST VIRTUAL 'BOTS'.  
[WITHOUT FEAR OR OBSTRUCTION]

LEARN THE JOY OF MULTI-PLAYER  
MAYHEM WITH VOICE TUTORIALS.

GET ONLINE AND FRAG ON THE  
SERVER OF YOUR CHOICE WITH  
A COUPLE OF CLICKS.

THIS IS A CHALLENGE.  
TO ANYONE WHO EVER  
TOOK A MAN DOWN IN A 3D SHOOTER,  
AND LIKED IT.

THINK YOUR LAST CHANGE,  
TO PROVE THAT YOU ARE THE BEST OF THE BEST.  
THIS IS THE STABIA TORIAL ARENA OF THE FUTURE.

THIS IS A SINGLE-PLAYER TRIAL BY FIRE,  
A HEAVYWEIGHT DEATHMATCH  
CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE UNIVERSE.

FOR THOSE WILLING TO BUILD A MOUNTAIN OF BODIES,  
AND CLIMB TO THE TOP,  
IN ENVIRONMENTS THAT STUN  
AGAINST A.I. THAT KILLS.

FOR THOSE WILLING TO STAKE THEIR LIVES  
IN THE PURSUIT OF VICTORY ...  
WE SALUTE YOU.

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IS A NEXT-GENERATION  
GAME IN EVERY  
SENSE OF THE TERM."  
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in association with  
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Digital Extremes



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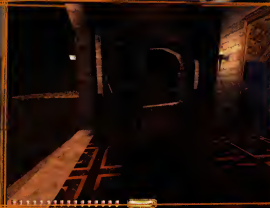
# You own the night.



LOOKING  
GLASS  
STUDIOS

They'll see it. The Most Amazing and the Looking Glass Light  
networks of Looking Glass Studios' Look@Glas Studios, h  
1998 EDOS, Edos Interactive, and BLINDS INTERACT. In  
2000, we were awarded the 2000 Interactive In  
teractive for our leading edge innovation in the  
Digital Software Awards and All-Time Best Game

[www.lglass.com](http://www.lglass.com)



# Everything else you have to steal.

All you have is your stealth, your cunning and the time between dusk and dawn. Luckily that is all you need because everything else is up for grabs – as long as you avoid wandering guards. Use the shadows as your cover. Treasure the silence of your footsteps. And enjoy a nice quiet evening in someone else's home.

- Enhanced Dark Engine allows for a more engaging stealth experience
- Advanced AI system creates a variety of human opponents to outwit
- Sophisticated new tools to improve your success as a master thief
- Realistic environmental weather effects like rain, fog, and snow

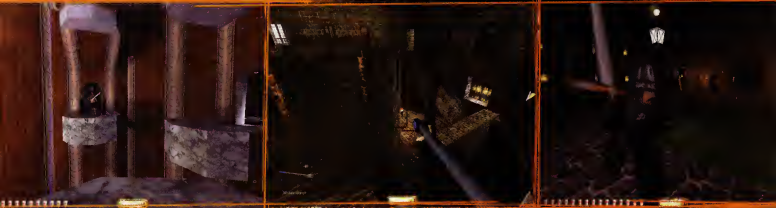
# THIEF II

THE METAL AGE

Steal the interactive demo at  
[www.eidos.com](http://www.eidos.com)

Go to <http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411>: Product Number 25

EIDOS  
INTERACTIVE



## ON THE CUTTING EDGE

Ever since issue #1 of **PC Accelerator** (ahh, the memories) we have pushed the envelope in taste, design, style, wit, creativity, and general offensiveness in our complete and incisive commentary on the PC games industry. So after 19 issues of this crap you'd figure we were just about out of ideas (not to mention people to offend). Well, you're dead wrong. In fact, this issue we've stepped it up even more with part one of our plan to take over the world. This first step is a small redesign that will quietly and quite forcibly draw readers into our prose and only let them out for the occasional 40 ounce of Malt Liquor. The changes are so slight that the naked eye may not even be able to tell the difference. But after reading this issue you'll notice that you feel happier, more complete, and just can't stop smiling. You may think that somebody slipped a mickey in your **PCXL**, but don't worry it's just our subtle attack on the dopamine cells in your brain.

Next issue we will continue to make small changes, find new people to offend, and deliver the most honest, accurate, and entertaining gaming magazine you've ever seen. If this is your first time reading **PCXL**, go ahead give it a read, but don't blame us when you start having withdrawals on a monthly basis. The only known cure for "acceleritus," is more **PCXL**. Luckily for all of you we arrive on newsstands every single month to satisfy your heathen cravings.

Indulge ... I mean enjoy.

### THE TEAM

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**MIKE SALMON** → [mike@pcxl.com](mailto:mike@pcxl.com)  
**IF HE WERE THREE FEET SHORTER HE'D BE** → Hervé Villechaziz  
**NOW HE'S CHANGED** → He's the best he's lost his edge. He used to be the most offensive man in California, now he's not even the most offensive man at his desk.  
**HOT FOR TEACHER** → Mrs. Webster, 9th grade Science. She made the periodic table more like the erotic table.  
**NOW PLAYING** → Lots of games and stuff

#### EXECUTIVE EDITOR

**ROB SMITH** → [rob@pcxl.com](mailto:rob@pcxl.com)  
**IF HE WERE THREE FEET SHORTER HE'D BE** → Kenny Baker  
**NOW HE'S CHANGED** → Quikky Britishness has become more bizarre and he has attained an uncomfortable amount of knowledge about Dan Knotts.  
**HOT FOR TEACHER** → Miss Fess, art teacher, who refused his constant requests to pose nude.  
**NOW PLAYING** → Quake III, Pro Pinball

#### HANDLING EDITOR

**PHILIP MAYARD** → [phil@pcxl.com](mailto:phil@pcxl.com)  
**IF HE WERE THREE FEET SHORTER HE'D BE** → The Mayor of the Littlebig Guild  
**NOW HE'S CHANGED** → Came free ways have given in to fits of giggles as deadlines continue to be the core of our collective existence.  
**HOT FOR TEACHER** → In Texas the teachers were classified as livestock; and he had no desire to milk those cows.  
**NOW PLAYING** → *Bette Midler Live!*

#### STILL THE NEW GUY

**MATT HOLMES** → [matt@pcxl.com](mailto:matt@pcxl.com)  
**IF HE WERE THREE FEET SHORTER HE'D BE** → Yem Troyer (Dr. Spock)  
**NOW HE'S CHANGED** → Had a full head of hair in the interview, now he's bald and wears spock.  
**HOT FOR TEACHER** → Matt is pretty much "hot" for anything that moves and has a sizeable adult apple ... so we hear.  
**NOW PLAYING** → Quake II, Unlabeled Tournament, Menace: Torment, Earth 2000

#### ART DIRECTOR

**KYLE LEOBEUF** → [kyle@pcxl.com](mailto:kyle@pcxl.com)  
**IF HE WERE THREE FEET SHORTER HE'D BE** → Adam Rich  
**NOW HE'S CHANGED** → Apparently he has found a new calling in life and will soon be leaving **PCXL** to pursue a career as a street performer in the perfect street.  
**HOT FOR TEACHER** → She's actually dated Miss Saunders, an art teacher ... of course he won't in school and he had no class.  
**NOW PLAYING** → Opposing Force, QW

### MIKE SALMON, Editor in Chief

## SPOTTHEFAKEAD

Find the ad in **PCXL** that just ain't right and email [mike@pcxl.com](mailto:mike@pcxl.com) to qualify for "fabulous" prizes.  
**JANUARY FAKE AD** → Asheron's Body Coll.  
**HOCKEY** → Asheron's Coll. Body Coll. and wacky urban 9/11ers.  
**FEBRUARY FAKE AD** → Mac Goner  
**MOCKING** → Macs, PC Gamer, Imagine Media  
**"Fabulous prizes this month = Teen Digital Over 2, our Millennium Edition of Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation**

## HIDETHEMIDGET

As a special tribute to the little facets of comedy we have gone to extremes to include facts, figures, and fun involving fully grown people in adorable little packages. Spot our enforcements to the vertically challenged and email them to [mike@pcxl.com](mailto:mike@pcxl.com). The winner will get a sizable prize.  
**NOTE: By no means are we making fun of people who are disproportionately sized. We are merely celebrating their place in entertainment lore. And if it makes you feel any better, we make fun of full-sized people in every single issue.**

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**IF HE WERE THREE FEET SHORTER HE'D BE** → Dan Egger  
**NOW HE'S CHANGED** → He was once a quiet, hard working cog in the **PCXL** machine. Now he dries the towels in the always brilliant vest of Eric Mike Salmon.  
**HOT FOR TEACHER** → No real life experience but he has watched my Turbo 16 times.  
**NOW PLAYING** → Quake III, Florescence: Torment, Star Trek: Middle Evil

#### INTER-MODEL/FASHION COORDINATOR

**GIA DECARLO** → [gia@pcxl.com](mailto:gia@pcxl.com)  
**IF HE WERE THREE FEET SHORTER HE'D BE** → A black haired Barbie  
**NOW SHE'S CHANGED** → The encouragement of readers has convinced her to take more photos wearing less and less clothing.  
**HOT FOR TEACHER** → With all that Mike has laughed her about magazines, it isn't hard to see why she has a major crush on him (Eh mate. This section was written by Mike, not Gia).

#### ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

**ERIC SMITH** → [eric@pcxl.com](mailto:eric@pcxl.com)  
**IF HE WERE THREE FEET SHORTER HE'D BE** → Adam Rich  
**NOW HE'S CHANGED** → His continuing insistence that the Mac is the best machine has subsided since he got a PC at his desk. So has the amount of "back" he does on the Mac.  
**HOT FOR TEACHER** → He was TA'd in Ms. Mann, sadly there was no T or A.  
**NOW PLAYING** → Boulder's Gate, Boulder Zone, Unlabeled Tournament



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<p><small>It's NOT A BITCH IT'S A SHAMAN                  Why? Because the trend is the already-trendy word's sister to bitch, which can't stand against words of beauty, confidence, and other such BS. At "It's Not A Bitch" a Goddess "will" have an ad that speaks the truth for each customer and then charges \$50 for the same exact \$5 because they just want the customer before there... suckers! Why? Well, because when you're buying something and are willing to pay any 50 much for just about anything? Why? Because... Could he have had an actual Shimone willing to work for 50, 25 dollars, but we've always felt it</small></p>	

In our search for pictures of midgets on the web we saw "more" of them than we really wanted



**FINAL FANTASY VIII**

**NOW ON YOUR PC**

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PC CD-ROM

**SQUARESOFT**

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Published by Square Electronic Arts L.L.C.



TEEN  
ANIMATED VIOLENCE  
MILD LANGUAGE  
SUGGESTIVE THEMES  
For more information on this rating, visit [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org)  
For rating information, visit [www.fifa.com](http://www.fifa.com)

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# MATT-URAL SELECTION

TWO DISCS ENTER, ONE DISC LEAVES

**F**ew men have stomachs strong enough to witness what takes place in the confines of the Demo Decision Room (DDR, we need an acronym to make it sound important). Just after the previous month's disc is sent to mass production, next month's virgin disc is placed on the shelf, empty and waiting to accept the victors of this hellish competition. For the next month, the UPS man will show up with contestant demos from all corners of the gaming industry and throw the packages into the DDR, where Matt's bald head and lipstick-encrusted mouth await. The demos that survive are burned onto the official PC Accelerator disc.

## A VIEW TO A KILL

The detritus that landed on the cutting room floor ...

### EARTH 2150



**Entered the arena** → A strong contender with true 3D landscapes and exciting effects  
**In a bodybag because** → In 2150 A.D., the demos are non-playable

### VIRTUAL SAILOR



**Entered the arena** → Promising, wait for it, an "extremely immersive marine experience"  
**In a bodybag because** → It's nothing like a hump-hump bar in Da Nang

### TZAR: THE BURDEN OF THE CROWN



**Entered the arena** → Representing for the entire nation of Bulgaria  
**In a bodybag because** → Apparently the Warcraft 2 clone market is hot over there

## LEGEND

- DEMO
- PATCHES
- A/V
- MAPS
- TOOLS
- RATING

## THE SURVIVORS

- THIEF 2
- BOARDER ZONE
- COUNTERSTRIKE BETA 5
- CRUSADERS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC
- GABRIEL KNIGHT III
- INTERSTATE '82
- QUAKE III - CTF MAPS
- SWAT 3
- TOMB RAIDER IV: "THE TIMES"

## PATCHES

- DIRECTX 7A
- HOMEWORLD
- JAGGED ALLIANCE
- STARFLEET COMMAND
- AGE OF EMPIRES II
- AGE OF WONDERS
- REVENANT
- ULTIMA IX: ASCENSION



Fearing yet another "motion sickness" lawsuit, we decided to scrap the whole interface in favor of this newer, better version, requiring the most minimal motor skills. In no time you will adjust to this traumatic shift in your world and thank us with cases of cold beer.

REQUIREMENTS: WINDOWS 95/98, PENTIUM 133MHZ, 32MB RAM, DIRECTX 5.0, MOUSE, 100% SOUND BLASTER COMPATIBLE CARD

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## THE DISC MINI-FAQ

- Q.** Why aren't there any puzzle or trivia games on the CD?  
**A.** Despite the fact that *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* has been beating every other PC game in sales, it didn't beat a damn thing when we tossed it in the DDR. Besides, that stuff's for sissies.
- Q.** How come the disc sucks less now than Ed's game?  
**A.** Independent studies have shown that the new disc is considered to be "the shee-it" by good-looking, healthy, sexually active males in their 20s. Failure to comply with this demographic is beyond our control.
- Q.** Does the disc editor really have a bald head and wear lipstick?  
**A.** It's not our fault. He didn't come to the interview that way.

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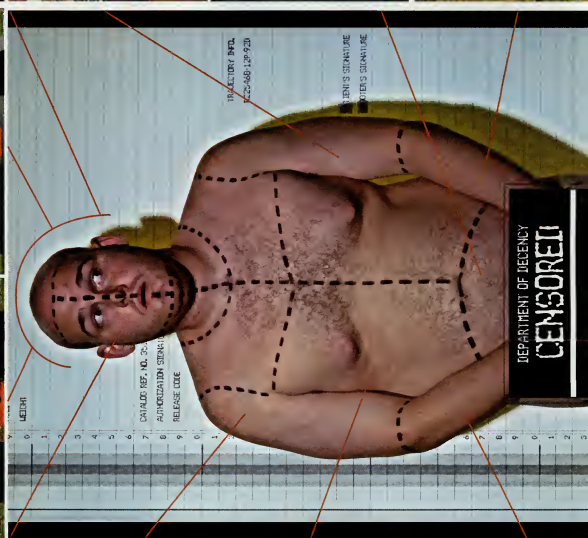
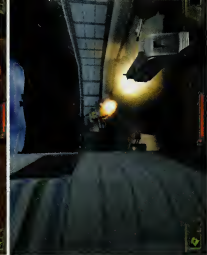
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# GAMING 101

PHOTOGRAPH BY FAC MOORE

**PXL UNIVERSITY OF GAMING**



**PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF MUTILATION:**  
Tim Willits explores *Quake III Arena's* fine points



**IDEOLOGIES OF TEAMWORK:**  
Barry Brenesal discusses the importance of structure in the fantasy adventuring party



**UNDERSTANDING SIDEKICKS:**  
Stevie Case and John Romero divulge the inner workings of a top secret AI\*  
\* "Top secret" in the sense that it hasn't been revealed due to the game not being quite finished



**ASSAULT WITH DEADLY INTENT:**  
Cliff "Cliffy B" Bleszinski considers the role of the pimp in Assault challenges



**PRINCIPLES OF SPELLCASTING:**  
Jason D'Aprile and Legend Entertainment reveal the concoctions and potions needed for high-powered magic use



**PAGE 18** **PAGE 24** **PAGE 28** **PAGE 32** **PAGE 34**  
**QUAKE III ARENA** **PLANESCAPE BALKATANA** **UNREAL TOURNAMENT** **WHEEL OF TIME**

# Practical Applications of Mutilation

PREREQUISITE: **QUAKE III**

INSTRUCTORS: **TIM WILLITS, JEREMY WILLIAMS, ROB SMITH**

OTHER COURSES: **REMOVING HEADS FROM TORSOS: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**  
*Quake III Arena* looks simple on the surface. To truly appreciate its depth and game-play styles, this course tutors you on each of the three primary game types in *Q3A*: One-on-one, mass deathmatch, and capture-the-flag.

Tactics contained within these level-specific strategies are relevant for every aspect of our 1999 Game of the Year. So, class, show your appreciation for our guest Professor of Deathmatching, the Lord of Level Design, id Software's very own Tim Willits. Study hard and you just might pass the test.

**ONE-ON-ONE: Q3TOURNEY6**  
*Q3tourney6* looks like the simplest map to play in the game. It only has two main platforms with a few acceleration pads between them. Sounds simple huh? Not quite.

The most important thing to remember while playing this map is attack. Even if your aim or weapon skills don't match up, you can crush your opponent if you drive them into the ground, or off it. There are two ways to be aggressive. The first is to grab the rocket launcher, hit the top acceleration pad [1] and air control (by pulling back and sideways) into the middle of the opposite platform. Fire

rockets while flying through the air to obscure your position and then clear the platform where you are about to land. The second aggressive tactic is making your opponent hide behind the pillars in fear of your railgun. Even if you can't get a good shot right away, fire anyway. Your opponent will think they are targeted and run for cover. This will give you the opportunity to see where they are and get set up for the next shot.

Important note: The BFG [2] is a red herring. You are very vulnerable when you attempt to grab it, and even more so when you jump down from the platform. Plus, getting squished by the crusher isn't nice, either. I

never go for the BFG, though I may travel to the platform in an attempt to confuse my opponent. If you feel that you can't survive without it, time your jump. First, shoot the squisher trigger [3] before you take off. Wait two seconds then go for it. The squisher trigger resets its self after five seconds, two seconds after the squisher rises. That opens a window of three seconds to fly through the air, grab the BFG and jump off the platform to safety.

The rocket launcher should only be used when you are on the same platform or when you need the smoke cover for an air attack. Don't shoot it at your opponent across the map — you only look silly and you give your position away. Also, don't forget you can hit the squisher trigger with the machine gun, much easier than with a rocket.

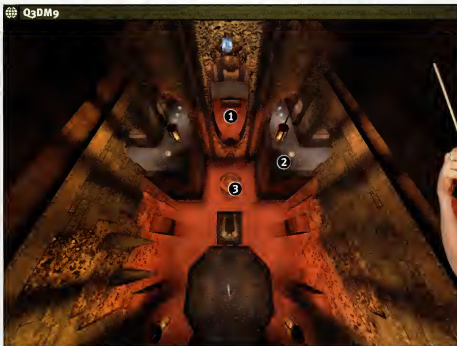
Practice flying across the map facing backwards — this is the best position to be in to rail someone who tries to rush you on your platform.

Rocket-jumping allows you to do some really fun things. Try rocket-jumping off the second bounce pad (the one leading to the BFG platform). You can rocket-jump on top of the squisher [4] and rail death down on your opponent. Another great rocket-jump is backwards off the BFG platform on to the mega health [5]. Use the mirror on the floor of the BFG platform to gauge your distance to the edge. Rocket-jump at the last moment before you fall off, having the personal teleporter during this stunt also helps in case you miss and fall into space.

Forget about the mega health unless you can strafe rocket-jump. If you can pull off this tricky move, jump off right next to the top acceleration pad. I make this jump about one out of three times. If you pull it off, your opponent will think you are a *Quake III Arena* god!

## Q3TOURNEY6





### HARDCORE DEATHMATCH

**Deathmatch!** It is the chaos that existed before everything in the universe took shape. It is that against which the yin and the yang are constantly rebelling. And it is, and will always remain, a staple of multiplayer gaming. Get used to it.

There are scary-ass kids out there with nothing better to do with their weekends and evenings than play Q3A until their eyes bleed. We're going to get you up to speed with them in a matter of minutes, using one map: Q3DM9, "Hero's Keep," as an example of controlling a level, running routes, and kicking booty. Now pay attention.

This particular map is divided into two main rooms. The first houses the Rocket Launcher and an oft-overlooked MegaHealth. The traditional path to the Rocket Launcher involves the acceleration pads[1]. These pads are a veritable deathtrap; don't use them. Any monkey can predict where you're going to land and send a few rockets express same-day delivery. Instead, jump or fall down from the ledges on the side of the room[2]. Sult up and get out.

There are three exit routes. The obvious one is the acceleration pad, but you run the chance of hitting someone coming the opposite direction and dropping into the lava. Instead, try rocket-jumping back up to one of the ledges you dropped from[2].

Remember that your own rockets hurt only half as much as an opponent's. You'll take 50 damage, but it's far better than being railed by the enemy. The third exit from the Rocket Launcher is the best and most difficult to maneuver. It is possible to jump around the acceleration pad onto another obscured bounce pad slightly below[3]. This one launches you straight up into

the MegaHealth and, if you push forward, onto one of the ledges above. It's very fancy.

The other half of the map is home to the Rail Gun and a suit of Heavy Armor. The obvious route to the armor involves dropping in a hole at the opposite end of the room[4] and consequently hitting two bounce pads. This takes too long. Unless you need the

▶ p. 22



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gold (50) health below, walking around the acceleration pad below the armor, falling directly onto the second bounce pad [5 - p.19]. Grab your new digs.

Now there are a couple of possibilities here. If you're the camping type, there are few places in all of *Quake III Arena* better to hideout than the ramps leading up from the Red Armor [6 - p.19]. No one checks there. Light a fire and start roasting s'mores. If you're the aggressive type, however, you'll want that Rail Gun. It is possible to jump to it from the Red Armor, if you time it just right. Study the screenshot and practice.

The rest is basic deathmatch strategy. Always be moving. Fire rockets at your opponents' feet. When possible, lure enemies instead of chasing them. Learn when to abort attack and recover your health and armor. And most importantly, listen. Audio cues allow you to see through walls.

Remember, when playing *Q3A*, the best way to improve your skill is to play people better than you are. Our best advice is to quell your frustration and learn from your enemy.

#### CAPTURING THE FLAG (Q3CTF4)

CTF has dominated the PCXL office with momentous victories over the whiny *PC Gamer* boys. Of the four shipping CTF maps, *Q3CTF4* has some of the most outlandish strategic opportuni-

ties. Its wide open nature makes camping on some of the platforms like shooting fish in a barrel – and the lack of defenses means you're often the fish.

This map is ideal with three-on-three or four-on-four games (any more and it's chaotic). There are a few obvious control points. [1] Right above your flag is a platform that's reached from the accelerator pad on central ledge [2]. Going through the colored teleporters, [3] then leaping down get you to the central ledge. Before heading to the top

camping spot stock up with the rocket launcher (and rockets). The platform has a hole in it that you can fire through. In a coordinated two person attack, both players should go over the central platform, one taking the accelerator pad to the railgun platform above the enemy flag, and the other should take the bounce pad over, then take the other bounce pad to get the flag. The guy on the platform can cause chaos in the enemy defenses by raining rockets down from his area.

Remember, whenever a camper sits on that ledge, everyone on your team is a target. Have your flag defender armed with the railgun – he's got the best angle to take out a sniper.

#### RETRIEVING THE FLAG

With flag in hand, your problems start. There are a couple of great shortcuts if you're an expert with the rocket-jump. The first route is to head straight down the middle and call for support from your team. The accelerator pad in the middle makes you a reasonably tough target for a sniper, but don't give them an easy shot by jumping on the next bounce pad [4]. Instead, rocket-jump off that bounce pad and, with practice, you should be able to reach your flag in one leap. Should you miss, air control to the middle of the platform and drop to the lower bounce pads [5] that shoot you skyward to the moving platform.

As soon as you're airborne, start looking down to air control on to the platform. Immediately grab the BFG and MegaHealth and jump straight down. Try to land on an accelerator pad as you land in order to avoid taking falling damage.

For the real pros, a reverse rocket-jump (running, jumping, and firing backwards) from the bounce pad on the central platform can, if you're dead lucky, land you straight on the flag platform. Good luck!

▶ p. 24



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PC GAMES

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NOTE: NO DWARVES WERE HARMED (MUCH) DURING THE MAKING OF THIS GAME



PICK YOUR FAVORITE LITTLE FELLA AND GIVE HIM A GOOD TOSS



HIDDEN "MINI" GAMES LIKE MIDGET BOWLING ADD TO THE MAYHEM



MUSIC PROVIDED BY FAMOUS LITTLE PERSON BAND "MEN WITHOUT HEIGHT"

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### LOOK FOR THESE OTHER GAMES FROM P.I.G.

- EXTREME COCK FIGHTING - ALWAYS BET ON THE BLACK ONE
- HALF-PINT - TOSS. LAUGH. POINT. STARE.
- MTR (MIDGET TEAM RALLY) - THE LITTLE RACERS THAT COULD
- MY QUIET NEIGHBOR - IT'S ALWAYS THE QUIET ONES
- PMS: THE GAME - THE BITCH IS BACK

**EXTREME DWARF TOSSING**

Go to <http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411>: Product Number 3'0"

# Ideology of Teamwork

PREREQUISITE: PLANESCAPE: TORMENT INSTRUCTOR: BARRY BRENESAL

OTHER COURSES: NETHER WORLDS GEOGRAPHY: WHERE THE HELL IS PLANESCAPE?

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Professor Brenesal, a veteran of epic adventures with companions in the wildest and weirdest parts of the fantasy cosmos, imparts his vast experience in an enlightening class. Ideology of Teamwork will inform potential adventurers about the ideal skill selections, and the physical and mental qualities you should look for in gaming companions.

## BUILDING CHARACTER 101

### THE BASHER

Focus on strength and dexterity. Bad-tempered large people don't really need or use a lot of Charisma, so forego adding to that. It doesn't hurt to add a few extra points to Intelligence. Even if you don't plan to have your party leader cast spells in battle, you can use him as a storehouse for a few Knock spells, while the real mages concentrate on more violently antisocial magicks.

### THE LOREMASTER

If you have a few extra points to throw around after piling them on Intelligence, give some thought to giving them to Dex-



Be careful in your selection of which dialog tree to follow. They will have different repercussions should you offend someone. And you don't want repercussions. They're bad.

terity. It makes you harder to hit, and mages bruise easily.

### THE SHADOW

Before you worship the Lady of Pain's doll and end up in her maze, switch to being a thief (hopped up on Dexterity skills). That way, you'll be able to stay

safe out of sight while you work your way out, and avoid extremely unpleasant run-ins with Shadows.

**Final Notes:** Wisdom is a helpful attribute to all adventurers. It gives you more experience after completing a quest or regaining a memory, adds to your spell repertoire (after repeatedly discussing philosophy with Dak'kon), and opens more conversational choices.

Remember that your character, The Nameless One, can be all three character classes listed above, albeit never at the same time. You may find different classes suited to the varying challenges that show up along your way. In that case, don't let any statistic suffer too much, unless it's Constitution. (Who cares about low hit points? You'll live again almost at once, and with all your wounds healed, too.)

### BUILDING A PARTY

**Note:** You can only add five members to your party, but there are seven potential party members waiting to join you. One highly workable strategy involves balancing your group so that it contains one thief and priest, and a pair of both fighters and mages.

### DAK'KON

Essential for any party. He's a fighter/mage who can move your party leader between those two professions at a moment's notice. If your leader has good Wisdom, Dak'kon will also teach him many useful spells; and he comes equipped with an excellent enchanted weapon.

Be sure to "use" The Unbroken Circle of Zerthimon when your character is in mage mode. The more Wisdom you have, the more of Zerthimon's circles you can learn, gaining spells for both Dak'kon and yourself.



It's not advisable to take "skeptical eyes" from strangers.



Of all the dangers in the realm of *Planescape*, the most feared of them all are the vicious, killer, dancing peanuts.

#### ANNAH

She's the only thief available to you, so she's valuable even if you don't want to use her ability to let your party leader switch between fighter and thief modes. Annah's initial punch daggers are somewhat weak, but you'll find such items as the Punch Daggers of Modrin on your travels that can be devastating when combined with her nasty backstabbing.

When you're in thief mode, train in the thievish skills that Annah doesn't have, and vice versa. You can then initiate "teaching" dialog options between one another — not truly learning the skills in the process, but gaining experience.

#### FALL-FROM-GRACE

Fall-From-Grace is your party's only available priest. Besides the usual itinerary of heals, blesses, and curses, she also has access to Call Lightning.

Given the sheer amount of inexpensive healing items in the world (not to mention your character's native ability to heal rapidly), give serious thought to whether you need Fall-From-Grace in a party. Her combat value is negligible.

You may want to turn off the NPC AI should Fall-From-Grace join the party. She has a really bad habit of healing your character, although he has (with the aid of tattoos) an extremely fast healing rate that doesn't require her aid.

#### MORTE

The skull can actually do some decent damage when you

upgrade his teeth; and that taunting ability of his is a secret weapon whose value can't be overestimated. Morte can taunt slow, powerful opponents to concentrate on him, while the rest of your army bash it into submission. (His taunt is not magical in nature, so magical resistance doesn't help.) This is also extremely effective against boss monsters.

Note that Morte's taunts become more effective if he overhears vicious insults. If you refuse the services of a harlot or get into an argument with Kimaxxi Adder-Tongue (to list but two incidents — there are more) Morte will gain from the experience.

#### NORDOM

The only party member you can acquire who uses missiles, and he has an unlimited supply of them, along with dual crossbows. Need I say more? Well, there's also this: He can locate otherwise undetectable portals.

Don't ask Nordom to kill everything in sight, which is a dialog option. He'll immediately attack your party, costing you a very strong ally.

#### IGNUS

If your hero is a mage, you should be able to get by with just Dak'kon adding to your party's magic abilities; but if not, consider adding this rather unstable pyromaniac to your group. He knows a number of spells you can't get elsewhere, and his endless supply of fireballs amount to a reasonably powerful ranged attack.

Ignus is easily angered, and once angered at you, he will cease to cooperate. Be sure you end any conversation with a discussion of flames, to keep him happy.

#### VHAILOR

Another excellent fighter, he's a ▶



Old flames die out, but I can always make new ones.

## ARMY MEN WORLD WAR

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Take a time out to prepare your strategies in combat.

dead Mercykiller who has essentially possessed his old suit of armor. Vhalior is extremely resistant to spells, and extraordinarily good with a blade.

Vhalior and Ignus do not get along. It is not recommended that they be placed in the same party. We are not responsible for any damage that results from ignoring this warning.

#### COMBAT 101

##### FIGHTERS

Attack the magic-users first. If you do some damage, you'll usually cause the magic-user to lose their current spell. Concentrate your efforts on a single foe.

Just like with clothes, you need a weapons wardrobe for different situations. You'll want to do lots of small, quick damage to magic-users, but use a nice, big, heavy weapon to attack those really large and well-armed enemies.

##### MAGES

Hang back. Hit the enemy at a considerable distance with damaging area attack spells to keep them away from your party. If enemies close in, try individually directed attack spells that won't damage nearby party members.



Remember, the Nameless One is immortal, so dying's not really that big of a deal.

Use Magic Missile and Chromatic Orb spells to interrupt enemy spellcasters. One all-too-neglected group of spells has a negative effect on all enemies within a given area. Although you'll see no obvious result (except possibly a change in foes' coloration), hitting a group of enemies with magic that lowers their resistances, chances to hit, and armor can make a big difference in a battle's outcome.

##### THIEVES

It's difficult to enter stealth mode during battle. Hide before entering combat and a thief can get three or four times the damage on one backstab. Do not steal more than you can carry.

##### PRIESTS

Hang back. You've only got one potential priest in your party,

Fall-From-Grace, and her healing and blessing spells are important to the rest of the party. Don't neglect the value of her Call Lightning spell. It can wreak a pleasant amount of area damage. The tailor in the Clerk's Ward has some armor that significantly enhances the number of spells Fall-From-Grace can learn. Since her healing spells are FFG's single largest asset, consider buying this as soon as you can afford it.

##### TACTICS

When faced with powerful foes, use Morte to taunt some of them away. An ideal situation pits you against a single slow-moving foe, enraged at Morte, with a solid group of allies blocking all access to the obnoxious skull.

Avoid attack jams, where everybody tries to pile on top of

one another in an effort to get a hit. It's an inefficient use of firepower, and becomes embarrassing when one of your people on the front line gets hurt by the enemy and can't withdraw. Instead, surround your victim.

Don't forget magic items! Don't hoard them on The Nameless One — magic items can make a difference in battle, particularly after your party has reached *Curst*. Use pipes, rods, mirrors, and charms!

Never underestimate the value of running away. When you encounter groups of powerful enemies (as in *UnderSigi!*), try drawing one or two after you. There are locations (such as the *Modron Maze*, set on difficult level) where an endless series of small battles is very dangerous and wears you down before an important confrontation.



To get the most from all the objects, items and magicks in the game it really is worth wading through all these text screens. And some poor bugger at the developers had to create them, so you better read them.



Torment's equivalent of Target. A one-stop shop for everything you need to vanquish evil, yadda, yadda, yadda.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

### PICKPOCKETING

Once a thief has worked their way up to an 80% pickpocketing rate or better, they are ready to ply their trade. Start stealing from the average citizenry before moving to high rent districts such as The Sensates' Feshall. Note that picked clientele do not regenerate goodies.

Avoid pickpocketing guards of any sort. They're observant, well-protected veterans, with big weapons and long memories. As a general rule, avoid stealing from shops. Most merchants are considerably savvier than your average street mark.

### TRADING

A merchant interested in whatever you're selling will offer their top price for everything in that category to all your party members. Once you leave, you'll not get the same prices again until the local market glut you've created vanishes. Stock up on specific commodities and unload them all to a single merchant.

Buy healing remedies on a regular basis. Blood charms are extremely cheap for their healing benefits. For smaller scraps and nicks, use Bandages.

Save your coins for some of the merchants you'll meet later in your adventures. You'll discover one-of-a-kind items (like the Jerkin of the Flitting Shadow) with costly price tags. And don't even think of stealing them. (See Pickpocketing, above.)

The Modron maze contains some of the best income-pro-

ducing merchandise you can find in the universe, with virtually no investment in time and energy. There are many merchants who will pay baskets of gold coin for Portal Lenses, Rods of Modron Might, Modron oculars, and other frequently occurring items.

### OPENING LOCKS

Most locked containers can be opened by bashing. For these, you can spend experience teaching a thief how to open locks, or give several Knock spells to your mage to memorize. You might also discover a sentient ocular lens that Nordon can use. It provides limited unlocking capabilities.

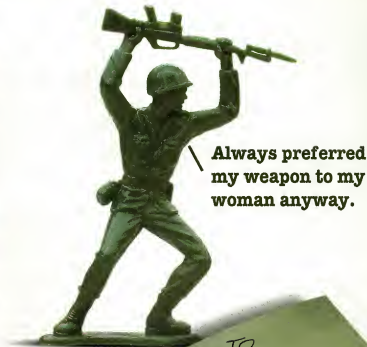
### CONVERSATION

Some conversational options will only be open to you with an extremely high Wisdom, Intelligence, or Charisma. If you find that people won't speak with you or your conversational options are very limited, consider artificially raising those attributes (via spells, tattoos, or charms) and returning.

### DYING

It happens, but it really isn't a big deal, provided you stay on the good side of the god-like Ravel and near-godlike Lothar. After your character dies, he is resurrected in an area of relative safety with damage removed.

You can resurrect up to three party members at a time. A newly resurrected party associate will reappear in terrible health, and with all their goodies lying on the ground where dropped. So, it's better if you die, rather than your party, because you get completely healed by the process, and everybody is moved to safety. So if you're all facing off against something which proves hopeless, put yourself in the way of danger or consider getting your party to kill you. ▶



# ARMY MEN WORLD WAR

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# Undress for Success

PREREQUISITE: DAIKATANA || INSTRUCTORS: STEVIE CASE AND JOHN ROMERO

OTHER COURSES: PREDICTING GAME RELEASE DATES; JAPANESE MYTHOLOGY



## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

When your name's on the game, as it is with John Romero's *Daikatana*, you figure the best person to give expert comment on the strategies and tactics would be that same John Romero. For further insightful tips, this course is privileged to have level designer Stevie Case deliver the lecture. Pay attention to the instruction, and keep your eyes on your papers, not the teacher. I said eyes on paper,

not the ... oh, to hell with it, it's not like you're listening ... but remember the instructions for manipulating your sidekick buddies Superfly and Mikiko as you track down the elusive and evil Kage Mishima!

## EPISODE ONE, KYOTO, JAPAN, 2455 C.E.

*Daikatana's* first episode is set in far future, techno-industrial Japan. Your quest begins in Kage Mishima's man-made swamp. The vast majority of your attackers in Kyoto are Mishima's

## EPISODE 3, NORWAY, 560 C.E.



These high-res screens show off how far the *Quake II* engine has come.

## EPISODE 4, SAN FRANCISCO, 2030 C.E.



## RAGEMASTER



Use your sidekicks carefully — if they die, it's game over.



## ► EXPERIENCE POINTS

Experience points are gained each time you kill a creature. Each time you reach the number of points necessary to level up you will be given the option to add a skill point to one of the five categories: Power, attack, speed, acro, or vitality. Your current level is shown on the status bar in the right-hand window. Just to the left of the image of the body is a small experience point status bar. Once the bar reaches the top and all ten notches are filled, you will be able to level up and add a skill point. Specializing in one or two specific skills is highly recommended. The more monsters you kill, the more experience you get, so slaughter away and get smarter!



The daiatama itself can also gain experience and become powered up to level five. Daiatama experience points are gained in the same way as regular experience points: by killing creatures. The more you use the sword the more powerful it becomes. At level five the daiatama will slash even the strongest of enemies to gibs in an instant. Take note, however, when using the daiatama all experience points go to the sword and cannot be applied to boost your skills! Accessing the game scoreboard shows the daiatama's current level. As an extra added bonus, the daiatama does double damage when slicing an unsuspecting enemy from behind.



robotic security forces, with some extra help from human guards. They often possess lethal ranged laser and bullet strikes, so you will usually be safest at a distance ducking behind obstructions.

Many of the massive robots, though deadly, are quite slow. Stay on the move to avoid the crushing robotic fists of the RageMaster. If you can circle-strafe quickly enough, the Disruptor Glove packs quite a tough electric punch and will shatter most robots with a few hits. **WEAPON NOTES:** The Ion Blaster is a great distance weapon, but discharges in water for extra damage. If you plan on using it in the Marsh or other watery areas, make sure you are on the bank! Anytime you jump into liquid, switch to another weapon to avoid self-inflicted bodily harm.

### EPISODE TWO, ANCIENT GREECE, 1200 B.C.E.

The mythical beasts of Ancient Greece employ mainly melee attacks. Stay a step away to maintain the advantage in battle. Fight each enemy as you encounter it, rather than running. The beasts will hound you through the entire level until the swarm is powerful enough to

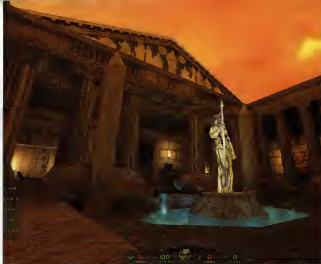
overtake your defenses. Trying to run usually results in being trapped against the rocks by a mass of attacking spiders, skeletons, thieves, and satyrs.

Your chances are always better one-on-one, so slash them to pieces as you find them. Use the rocky landscape to your advantage. If you're being chased, run backwards, firing at them. **WEAPON NOTES:** Though a single discus serves as another basic melee weapon, it can be built into a rather deadly tool. You cannot throw a discus again until it has returned to your hands. Collect as many discuses as possible for a more potent, rapid-fire device.

### EPISODE THREE, DARK AGES, NORWAY, 560 C.E.

Mystical creatures abound in the dark dungeons of Dark Ages Norway. The magical assaults of these dispossessed beings and wizards can be quite unpredictable. Rotworms attack with poisonous spit and Fletchers with bow and arrow.

Wyndrax the Wizard will unleash his magical wisps as Stavros the Sorcerer summons meteors from the nether dimensions. Two of the creatures in this era must be gibbed once killed, or else they will return to



The triangular part of the temple, where the characters are etched in relief is called the "frieze". Classical education, folks!

life and attack again. The rotting Bubold is one of these creatures. Gib his corpse with any weapon. Be careful not to turn your back; the Bubold can melt into the ground and reappear nearby. To rid yourself of the Lycanthir permanently, it must also be gibbed, but only with the dreaded Silverclaw.

**WEAPON NOTES:** The Ballista is a powerful weapon against all foes. Use it to pin your target to the nearest wall. The now-immobilized organism has little chance against your ranged attacks while trapped. It can also be used to perform a "Ballista Jump." To execute, run forward, look down, fire the Ballista and Jump at the same time to sail high above the ground.

### EPISODE FOUR, SAN FRANCISCO, 2030 C.E.

Futuristic, torn-down San Francisco is not a friendly environment, nor are its inhabitants. As you get closer to Mishima you will face seemingly endless Navy S.E.A.L.s, Sharks, and even escaped Lab Monkeys. Quick melee attacks will not stun them, so keep your distance and fight them in small groups. Keep an eye on your sidekicks' health. You will need their help to reach and defeat Kage Mishima.

**WEAPON NOTES:** The Slugger, weapon number two, has an alternate Cordite Grenade attack. To select it, press the Slugger key a second time. These little bombs unleash a mini-explosion on their targets. ► P. 32

## ► MIKIKO AND SUPERFLY



Superfly and Mikiko will join you at different points in the game. Sometimes you will battle alone, at other times only one of your companions will be around to help, and on occasion both will be in on the action. Both sidekicks will automatically perform the tasks necessary to follow you.

They will defend your party whenever possible, pick up health and ammo, and aid you in exploring unfamiliar territory. There are some basic commands available to help you keep your cohorts in check. Each of these commands can be accessed in the sidekick control menu, or bound to a single key in the main Keyboard menu.

To tell Mikiko or Superfly to get an item, point at the item with your crosshair and use the GET button. They will follow by design, but can be told to STAY.

If your friends are really hurting and you wish them to stay back, the BACK OFF command will keep them from attacking and taking further damage when in battle.

Though it is conceivable that you could fight through a level and later return to get your sidekicks, it is highly recommended to bring them with you into battle to begin with. Their help can prove invaluable in the long run.

# FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE! THE FUTURE!





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IS CRUSHED!

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Digital Anvil

# Assault with Deadly Intent

PREREQUISITE: UNREAL TOURNAMENT ||| INSTRUCTOR: CLIFF "CLIFFYB" BLESZINSKI

OTHER COURSES: UNREAL DOMINATION: MIND-BLOWING S&M

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Design-meister Cliffy B— he da main UT man. So, you've destroyed Deathmatch, dissed Domination, and Captured all the Flags. But this new, exciting "Assault" is overpowering your senses. No problem. He's got the inside dope on how to use Assault to get chicks.

## HOW TO BE AN ASSAULT PIMP

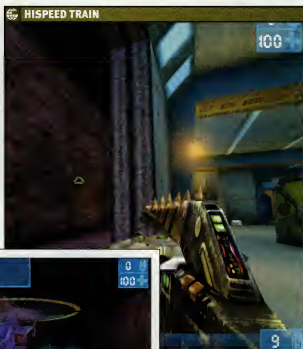
### HISPEED TRAIN

**DEFENSE** → The bouncy weapons are your best friends on this map. Many gamers feel that the Ripper is an underpowered weapon. Here and now, I challenge them to find a better gun for knocking folks off of the train. It is extremely important to get your orientation when you spawn and respawn as a defender in this map. The messages that update you on the locations of the defenders come in very handy as they cross through various cars.

**OFFENSE** → One of my favorite "sneaky" back door techniques in this map is to grab the jump boots and take the "high road" to the front car. Unless the defense keeps on their toes, you have a quick way to the front of



"You've got five minutes to learn these tactics or I start stripping. Now get to it."



Use the jump boots as you get off the chopper to get on top.

the train. Beware of the defense turrets, however, they can plug you full of holes faster than you can say "Double Kill."

### OCEAN FLOOR STATION 5

**DEFENSE** → I would strongly suggest picking two terminals and sticking to them as your defense points. Terminal 1 is fairly easy to defend as you have the best height advantage. Some of your team can spam grenades down the staircase that leads up to it while the other teammates cover the long hallway on the other side. **OFFENSE** → The best technique to assault this base is to split your team up into two "sub teams," each taking a different route to the objectives. Although many of you will probably get taken out, there's a great chance that one of you will make it



through the barrage and manage to sling a rocket at a terminal, shattering it and the hopes of the defense!

### MAZON FORTRESS

**DEFENSE** → Much like "Hispeed," getting oriented when you spawn in this arena is a bit tricky at first. Make sure you have some of your defenders in the front area of the fortress, as tricky attackers have been known to impact jump into the base and pull the wool over the collective eyes of the defenders. If you can cut the attackers off before they ever have a chance to get into the cave (and make a stab at the two chains) then you're in business. **OFFENSE** → There is one overwhelming, complicated strategy that works wonders in this map: Run like an idiot as fast as you can past the team cannons into the cave area. Honestly, you're far enough away from the attackers that they'll have to shoot down at you with weapons such as the Ripper and

## MAZON FORTRESS



(Left) Keep running to avoid the auto-cannons. (Right) Watch out for an ambush at this deadly choke point. Control this to win.

## ROOK



Learn the switch locations or you'll be running aimlessly and be a target for snipers.

## GUARDIA



Attackers enter this area to die. There's no way to avoid it. Don't play the level.

## OVERLORD



Tom Hanks' platoon should have bunny-jumped up the beach in Normandy to avoid casualties. It works for this map.

Rocket Launcher, so if you can bunny-hop and dodge well you should be able to squeak by. It's kind of a pity that we don't use Redeemers in our Assault maps, eh? It'd make the attackers' lives a hell of a lot easier.

## FRIGATE

**DEFENSE** → The "choke point" of this map is the main hallway immediately when you board the ship. This is the key hallway to defend. Beware of impact hammer jumping attackers who will try to take the high road by jumping off of the dock — they can prove to be the Achilles' Heel of your Defense.

**OFFENSE** → Many believe that there are only two ways into this boat — the dock and the underwater passage. However, seeing as PCXL is paying me thousands of dollars to give away all the dope Assault tricks, I will show you the secret third entrance. Try impact hammer jumping off of the dock to the top of the ship where you can come up behind the defenders and rip them a new one on your way to destroying the boiler. This opens the door to the control room. Try the

same technique to get to the control room; you'd be really surprised how few "hardcore" gamers know about this (or impact jumping in general!)

## GUARDIA

**DEFENSE** → This map is meant for a smaller game of Assault and becomes an absolute blood-bath if more than 8 players are playing it. Use it for practice. The team cannon will take a nice chunk out of your foes at the start of the map (it is very hard to avoid) and the Flak should do the rest. They should never see the bridge.

**OFFENSE** → Jumping and praying are your best bets here. You've got a Flak Cannon as well, so make sure you spray the area with hot flak.

## ROOK

**DEFENSE** → The BioRifle is your Friend in this map. You can cover the front door of the castle in seconds with more goo than the back seat of a porno theatre, causing devastation and mayhem for the poor attackers.

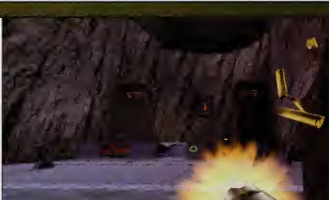
**OFFENSE** → The towers exist not only to hold some nice

weaponry for your team but also to provide a nice bit of backup for them as they make a break for the various courtyard objectives. Flak Grenades are immensely fun to drop on the ant-like defenders.

## OVERLORD

**DEFENSE** → Never let them through the boiler room. This is key to this map. You need to shut them down fast and early, and that means being a bully and kicking sand in the faces of the attackers. I find that the towers are more effective than the bunkers, so make sure you have a couple of buddies defending from them.

**OFFENSE** → Dodging and bunny hopping are great techniques to save your ass as you're storming the beach. Remember, this is a wide open area and you're going to be a pretty small target, so if you keep moving you'll have a chance. Once you're in the boiler room, try impact hammer jumping up the ledge. The final room is beatable if you use team work; let a few attackers act as decoys as other soldiers sneak in from in front of the gun. ▶



# Principles of Spellcasting

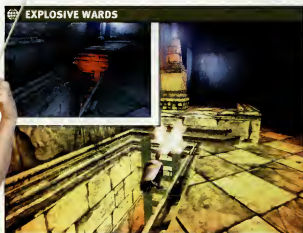
PREREQUISITE: WHEEL OF TIME || INSTRUCTOR: JASON D'APRILE AND LEGEND ENTERTAINMENT

OTHER COURSES: MAKING WHEEL OF TIME RUN SMOOTHLY ON MY CRAPPY MACHINE

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**  
Student instructor Jason D'Aprile and the guys at Legend put together this collection of killer spell combos and strategies guaranteed to make you top of the class. Principles of Spellcasting teaches the best use of spells in multiplayer games of *Wheel Of Time*.

## TIPS AND TACTICS FOR KILLIN' ONLINE

Researching and understanding the artifacts is probably the most important rule for both the single and multiplayer game. Learn exactly what does what, or else you won't be using these artifacts to their full potential. All else aside, while in combat, it's best to activate any shields as soon as you get them, or certainly before going into battle. On a similar note, always try to



So there I was, minding my own business, climbing a ladder, when all of a sudden a ward exploded in my face. Ouch.

turn on Reflect before running into a firefist. The combination of your projectiles and theirs firing back simultaneously is lethal. A good Citadel trick is to place the seal behind a wall, along with a few troops. When the

opposing player busts through the wall, your troops are waiting for them.

Remember that in *Wheel of Time* there is a defense for everything. Shields are elementally aligned, so knowing which particular shield to use on which attack is imperative.

The Shield rules to keep in mind are:

- Water works against Decay, Lightning and Ice
- Air works against Darts and Whirlwind
- Fire works against Fireballs, Seekers and Lightning.

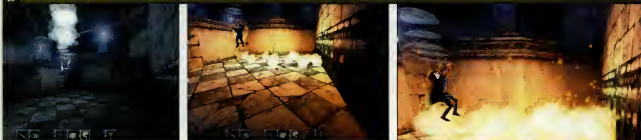
Fighting someone loaded up with Reflect shielding? Kill him with fireball splash damage.

## BALE JUMP



Getting to safe points is tricky, but possible with expert use of the Bale jump tactic.

## WHIRL WARD



When you can effectively combine the effects of certain powerful spells, it adds awesome weapons to your armory.

## EXPERT USE OF SPELLS

**SUMMONING:** Using underlings and monsters is imperative (especially in Citadel mode), but there are a few key strategies to remember when using and encountering Champions, Guardians, and Minions. First, other players get points for killing your summoned characters, and it's usually a lot easier to kill a minion than a player-character. Summoning Champions and Guardians (like Whitecloak archers or Masadans) and putting them in the right places for sneak attacks or sniper positions is always smart. The more mental Minions are a good diversion for those times when you need to distract someone about to kill you, or for guarding the entrance to a sniping spot.

**DISTANT EYE:** This is an exceptionally useful device against non-player characters. The Distant Eye has an infinite supply of darts that can be brutal when placed in a prime location. While other players generally destroy these on sight, NPCs ignore the Eye until they're dead. It's espe-

## ► COOL COMBOS

**FORK + APPROPRIATE ELEMENTAL SHIELD**  
(Works in the absence of Reflect)

**EARTH TREMOR + WHIRLWIND**

**FIND TARGET + A BUNCH OF SEEKERS AND DECAYS**

**FIRE SHIELD + FIREBALL**  
(Lets you get fire at very close range and not take splash damage)

**LIGHTNING AND EITHER A WATER SHIELD OR A FIRE SHIELD**  
(Both of these shields will protect you from electrocuting yourself, while shocking with abandon — especially while in the water. And, if you aren't shielded, don't use lightning in the water. Doh!)

cially fun to lay one down in an enemy citadel and let it harass the defenders.

**LEVITATE:** Pit drops are a common yet devastating trap, but levitating right before hitting the bottom is a way to avoid dying a foul, gib-filled death.

**EXPLOSIVE WARDS:** These are most effective when placed on ter'angreal spawn points, at the tops of ladders, or other choke points such as in doorways and on stairwells. A particularly nasty place to put a ward is right

under the Balefire spawning point on a level, since everyone wants it and most players don't look where they're going in their effort to get it. Another fun trick to use is to surround yourself with Explosive Wards, then Swap Places with someone. They'll usually end up running right into them.

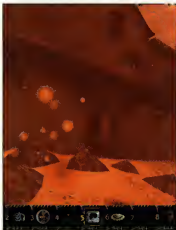
**WHIRLWIND:** In large open areas, use Whirlwind to lift people high up into the sky — letting them fall can be a supremely entertaining attack, since, if you can get them up high enough, they'll often gib on contact. It's especially handy over lava pits. The attacker needs to be a fair distance away from their opponent, since the further away you are, the faster the victim is lifted up.

To counter this attack, use Swap Places with the person lifting you after reaching a dangerous height. Alternatively, simply using Shift or Unravel before you get too high will work as well. As a last ditch effort (for those times when you find yourself dropped before you can do anything about it), you can actually make use of Balefire's ► p. 38

## SEEK REFLECT



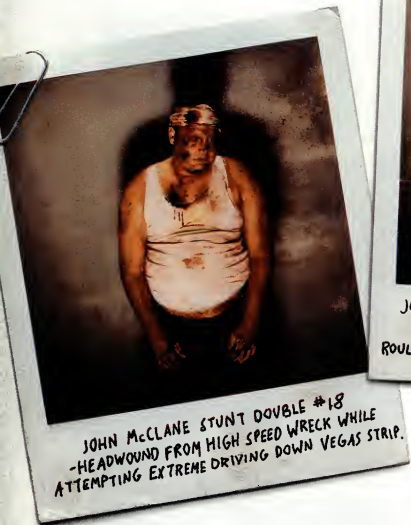
## WHIRL TREMOR



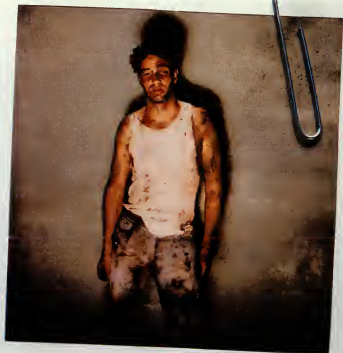
Whirlwinds and Tremors are powerful spells used to throw off your opponent.



You can run, but you can't hide from the Seekers. Remember to Reflect them back only when they have started gathering pace, so the unsuspecting caster will have to work his own magic to escape from them.



JOHN McCLANE STUNT DOUBLE #18  
- HEADWOUND FROM HIGH SPEED WRECK WHILE  
ATTEMPTING EXTREME DRIVING DOWN VEGAS STRIP.



JOHN McCLANE STUNT DOUBLE #134  
- STEPPED ON PROXIMITY MINE NEAR  
ROULETTE TABLE WHILE BATTLING TERRORISTS.

THEY COULDN'T HANDLE BEING  
JOHN McCLANE. CAN YOU?



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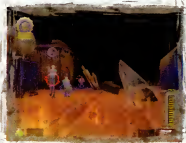




JOHN McCLANE STUNT DOUBLE # 56  
- ARM BROKEN NEAR SLOT MACHINES IN  
SHARPSHOOTERS DUEL WITH A RUSSIAN TERRORIST.



McCLANE IN 3RD PERSON ACTION MODE.



McCLANE IN SHARPSHOOTER MODE.



McCLANE IN EXTREME DRIVING MODE.

FLEX YOUR SKILLS IN ONE OF THREE  
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STORY-DRIVEN DIE HARD ADVENTURE.

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FASTER CARS AND A LOT MORE ODDS STACKED AGAINST HIM. SO TRY TO  
SAVE SIN CITY—JUST MAKE SURE YOU ALSO SAVE YOUR OWN BUTT.

Go to <http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411>: Product Number 138



## FOR CHEATING

## BASTARDS ONLY

When using our experts' tips and tactics doesn't improve your game there's no option but to turn to pure cheating. It's embarrassing to think that any PCXL reader would stoop so low as to use codes, but you're a malarkey bunch, that's for sure. So hang your head in shame as you use these fine codes.

## UNREAL TOURNAMENT

**Cheat Mode =** Press the tilde key (~) during a single-player game and enter IAMTHEONE to enable cheat mode. All the other codes listed here require this to be enabled first and the cheat code to be typed in the console window.

All Weapons = LODED

Ammunition = ALLAMMO

Flight mode = FLY  
To disable, enter WALK

God mode = GOD

No clipping = GHOST  
To enable clipping, enter WALK

Slay all enemies = KILLPAWNS

Spawn object = SUMMON [object]  
where object is an item to be spawned

Third person perspective = BEHINDVIEW

## ULTIMA ASCENSION

Find the file called default.kmp and open it with a text editor

Type the following commands in the same document

```
alt+shift+i = toggle_avatar_fly
alt+shift+e = toggle_avatar_invulnerable
```

Once in the game, hit Alt-Shift-I and Alt-Shift-E to activate the relevant cheat functions

## C&amp;C: TIBERIAN SUN

Free upgrades

Certain GDI structures, like power plants, can be upgraded. If such a structure takes damage, rather than repair it, upgrade it. The upgrade repairs all previous damage, creating a pristine new structure at the expense of extra cash

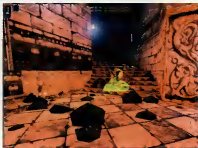
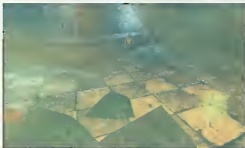
One-Hit Kills

As NOD, set up two laser sections. Turn one of them off and then as a unit passos between the fences, turn it back on. Getting caught in this power surge destroys any unit

Similar tactics work for GDI with Firestorm Wall Generators. Build these walls and wait for units to travel over one section. Switch on the Firestorm generator and see the enemy fizzle



Cheaters must stand in the corner and be ridiculed.



wicked, rocket-launcher-like kick. Just charge it up as you fall and you don't have any way to shake them, for instance, look for someone else's Anti-Magic Aura. Duck inside and wait for the Seekers to be shielded when they hit the spell.

**SEEKERS:** When someone fires a hunter spell at you, be it a Seeker, Decay, or something else, remember that they speed up over time, so don't reflect it or swap places right away. Instead, try running around the level for a little while, and let the spells chase you. Eventually, the seeker will get too fast to avoid. That's the best time to counter it with either a Reflect or Swap spell. Also, it's always a bad idea to throw Seekers out if you don't have the defenses to block them like Reflect. At some point, they'll likely end up coming right back at you.

**AURA OF UNRAVELING:** Always have one of these, otherwise Decay, Soul Barb, and Taint will zap you into a world of hurt.

When things get out of control and you're about to die, this Anti-Magic spell is a great last-ditch effort to give you a bit of a boost. If someone is covered in shields, getting them inside an Aura of Unraveling will strip them defenseless. This also makes a great housewarming gift for an opponent's citadel, given that while it's active, they can't do anything to defend their seals. This is especially good when you can surround your opponent with troops that don't require the One Power to do damage. There are times when you should take advantage of

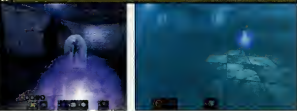
other players' defenses as well. If there are Seekers on your tail and you don't have any way to shake them, for instance, look for someone else's Anti-Magic Aura. Duck inside and wait for the Seekers to be shielded when they hit the spell.

**FREEZING:** If you freeze someone, do not use Darts on them — they'll hit the ice and bounce off harmlessly. Fireball, Earth Tremor, and Seeker are far more effective, and Balefire is the best. If you get yourself frozen, you're far from defenseless, however. Shift, SwapPlaces, and Unravel are all effective manners of escape.

**SOULBARB:** This is one of the best first-shot weapons. Whoever you hit with it will be rendered unable to attack without causing damage to themselves. They can't even heal without hurting themselves.

**BALEFIRE:** Nothing will stop Balefire — not walls, not defensive spells, not anything — so your only defense is to make it difficult for them to hit you by dancing around or setting them on the defensive. It's a good idea to send a couple of Seekers at your attacker, or a hit 'em with a barrage of fireballs, since it's much harder to aim when being attacked.

## BALE FIRE



# FINAL EXAM

## PCXL GAMING 101 GRADUATION EXAM

You've studied hard, prepared, and are ready for the final test. Ready to ace the class? Well, unlike in school where all you'll get is a letter written with a red sharpie, we've got stuff to give away. Okay, so it's not very good stuff. Actually, it's all the stuff that we don't want. But you might like it. Or you could give it to a friend, or as a gift. Or to Goodwill.

You have 30 minutes to answer all the questions. Keep your eyes on your own paper. Good luck.

① On what game is our cover model a level designer?

② From where can you backwards ratchet jump to the MegaHealth an Q3Tourmey6?

③ What is Matt's favorite shade of lipstick?

④ Why should you not ask Nardam to kill everything in sight?

⑤ What is Gio's role at PCXL?

⑥ What level can the daikatana attain?

⑦ What is the easiest terminal to defend in OceanFloor Station 5?

⑧ How did Hector Salazar die?

⑨ Why should you use a Fire Shield when attacking with Fireballs?

⑩ Who's your daddy?

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

TEAR OUT AND MAIL TO: **FINAL EXAM  
PC ACCELERATOR  
150 NORTH HILL DRIVE  
BRISBANE, CA 94005**

OR E-MAIL [FINALEXAM@PCXL.COM](mailto:FINALEXAM@PCXL.COM)

PCXL accepts no responsibility for responses made to this contest and makes no promise to fulfill any of the prizes suggested above. But if you're creative enough...

## FOR CHEATING

### ☹ BASTARDS ONLY

#### AGE OF EMPIRES 2

CHEAT	CODE
1000 food	CHEESE STEAK JIMMY'S
1000 gold	ROBIN HOOD
1000 stone	ROCK ON
1000 wood	LUMBERJACK
Cobra car	HOW DO YOU TURN THIS ON
Suicide	WIMPYWIMPYWIMPY

CHEAT	CODE
Control animals	NATURAL WONDERS
Instant building	ARGIS
Full map	MARCO
Lose campaign	RESIGN
No Fog of War	POLO
Saboteur	TO SMITHEREENS
Slay all opponents	BLACK DEATH
Slay one opponent	TORPEDO ← 1 - 8 →
Win campaign	I R WINNER

#### ASHERON'S CALL

Teapot dance  
Enter \*TEAPOT\* in the chat window to dance like an idiot

YMCA dance  
Enter \*YMCA\* in the chat window to do the Village People's YMCA dance

#### SIM CITY 3K

All the cheat codes require you to hit Ctrl+Shift+Alt+C during the game. Then type in the following commands in the console window

\$250,000 donation = call cousin vinnie

Everything free (bar bulldozing and budget) = I am weak

Get all rewards = Pay tribute to your king

Get a SimCastle = Enable "\$250,000 donation" cheat and refuse Cousin Vinnie's offer. Now enter cheat mode and type "zyxwvu"

UFOs = UFO Swarm (Note: Set "Disaster" to "UFO")

#### BATTLEZONE II

Enter cheat codes through the console (hold down the Ctrl key and press tilde [~] key). To exit the console hold down the Ctrl key and press the tilde key again

At the console, you will see the "%\_ prompt. Enter any of the codes at this prompt

Invulnerable to damage = game.cheat bzbody

Infinite ammo = game.cheat bzint

Everything costs a scrap = game.cheat bzfree

Win a mission automatically = game.cheat bzwinner

Enter the game editor = game.cheat bzeditor

Skipping Mission by Using Pilot Names  
If you go to the login screen and enter your name as "Play Scion" you will begin at the first Scion mission. If you enter your name as "Play ISDF" you will begin at the first ISDF mission after you get a chance to choose between Scion and ISDF (mission 15).

# REACH OUT AND FRAG SOMEONE

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- BALDUR'S GATE™

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Product Number 120

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# MDK2

Kurt Hectic, once a mild-mannered janitor, now savior of the universe is back in MDK2.

This time Kurt is joined by the dangerously brilliant Dr. Fluke Hawkins and the 6-legged gun-toting robotic dog Max. These three unlikely heroes are ready to out-sneak, out-blast and out-think their enemies.



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# a Janitor, a Genius and a 6-Legged Dog.

- Play as 3 heroes, each offering a different gameplay experience:

**Max**—Run-and-gun into battle with four arms of fire power.

**Dr. Hawkins**—Solve puzzles to create deadly weaponry.

**Kurt**—Sneak, snipe and shoot in a new suit equipped with a cloaking device.

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THIRTY-PLUS HOURS OF GAMEPLAY BOILS DOWN TO ONE MOMENT — THE END  
THIRTY-PLUS HOURS OF GAMEPLAY BOILS DOWN TO ONE MOMENT — THE END  
THIRTY-PLUS HOURS OF GAMEPLAY BOILS DOWN TO ONE MOMENT — THE END

# END OF GAMES



You rip the plastic off a new game box and greedily finger its contents, drooling with anticipation through the install process. Next to you, a small mountain of chips and beer are ready to satisfy the annoying cravings that might distract you from your Zen-like focus on the gaming challenge before you. But after the first 40 hours, something happens. Maybe it's work, a new girlfriend, or a newer game. You stop playing for "a while" and in the blink of an eye, months pass and you are uninstalling the game to make room for something else — sometimes its sequel.

These games never leave the true gamer's mind. They haunt us like ex-girlfriends from high school — the memory of spending hour upon hour slogging through freshly-spilled alien blood or searching for the lost Magic Jingus resurfacing at every trip to your local software store. You did all the work, but got cheated out of the payoff: The end of the game. Since we hate "blueballs" as much as the next guy, we did the necessary finishing moves on these lost games and laid it all out for you to smoke over. With many sequels on the way, here's how some of the hottest games came to a conclusion.

**S**

**SPOILER ALERT**

GO ON AND READ IT. YOU KNOW YOU WANT TO. GO IT. GO AHEAD. GO IT NOW

# END OF GAMES

## END OF GAMES

Like any good game or movie, the end of a game is the final payoff



**BRITNEY SPEARS**  
Every male in America wants to "hit this one more time"

## BALDUR'S GATE

After leaving Candlekeep and witnessing Gorion's death, the Immensity of the Sword Coast continually lavishes you with quest after ever-lovin' quest. The primary plot thread involves the weakening of Iron throughout the land and the growing political tensions that ensue. You discover that a man named Sarevok has been taking over the Iron Throne merchant guild by tampering iron mines and framing Amn, the country south of Baldur's Gate, for the bad iron. The real twist in the panties is that he's also your half-brother and your common father is Bhaal, God of Murder. He hopes to start a war between the Dukes of Baldur's Gate and Amn, but your constant thwarting of his plans forces him to settle for killing you personally. Too bad for him you have become a Grade A ass-kicker and are forced to settle this sibling rivalry once and for all.



Finally Sarevok and his cronies come out of hiding and I get to lay down the law.



You put Sarevok to sleep — permanently — and Sarevok's godly essence leaks out. The tiny motes of divinity creep across the floor and flow down a crack in the floor.



This crack is one hell of a hole, literally, since it goes down, down, down. Finally, these particles trickle down all over a huge statue of Sarevok. How come I don't get a statue?



Actually, it's probably a good thing I don't because those particles cause the statue to crumble to dust. It's a good thing (for Bhaal) there are a few thousand more to go. ARGH!

### HOW TO GET THERE:

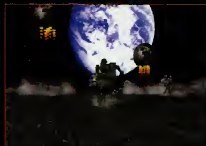
You can shave off 20 hours of playtime by pumping your characters up with cheats. Fortunately you'll still have a 500 more to go!

### IN THE END:

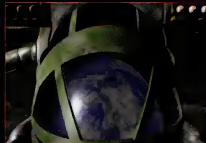
The final battle is a truly satisfying conclusion to the epic storyline. The last cutscene makes the best ending in recent memory even better.

## MECHWARRIOR 2

Frankly, the plotline of this game was so befuddling that only a diehard BattleTech grognard could figure out what the devil was going on. Being simple folk, we decided to make it simple and ignore it, opting to knit our brows on the killin' part. In every mission you load up your BattleMech (big robot, boom boom boom) with weapons of the future and travel from planet to planet beating the bejeezus out of the enemy. There are two sides, Clan Jade Falcon and the Clan Wolf. Both sides are trying to return home to Terra. Regardless of how stellar you are in combat, in the end the Wolf clan wins — at least in the background story. Nevertheless, they both have victory movies which show them arriving at Terra and speaking of their destiny now being its dominion.



Jade Falcon marches off to Terra.



Clan Wolf keeps their eye on the prize.



Talk about manifest destiny.

### HOW TO GET THERE:

Hold CTRL-SHIFT-ALT and type "ll" to end the mission successfully. Do this until you reach the final mission — easy, huh?

### IN THE END:

Clan Wolf gets all the victory kudos throughout the game, so it's a little more satisfying to win as them, but in either case the vision of Terra and your clan preparing to reclaim it is the blood wine that warms your cold-as-steel MechWarrior heart.



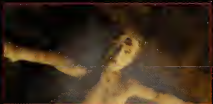
## DIABLO

Arriving in Tristram ready to hero it up, you quickly learn that the land is being terrorized by the demon Lord of Terror himself, Diablo, and it's time for you to lay down some holy ass-whuppin. When you're all done making your own personal bloodbath out of his underground lair, he comes out surrounded by hellish minions and he ain't happy. He'll tickle your chin with Armageddon spells and you'll have to chug Full Health potions like you're at a PCXL beer party, all the while perforating his fat red belly with your weapon du jour. When he finally goes down you must pry the shiny red soulstone from his head and stick it in yours. Finally you leave in search of a way to finish him for good.

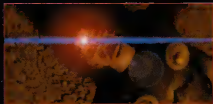
KNOW THIS, MY FRIEND - THE EVIL THAT YOU MOVE AGAINST IS THE DARK LORD OF TERROR. HE IS KNOWN TO MORTAL MEN AS DIABLO. IT WAS HE WHO WAS IMPRISONED WITHIN THE LABYRINTH MANY CENTURIES AGO AND I FEAR THAT HE SEEKS TO ONCE AGAIN sow CHAOS IN THE REALM OF MANKIND. YOU MUST VENTURE



Diablo gets some open-heart surgery. Say, wait a minute, there's that big fat soulstone I've been looking for! I'll take that, thank you.



I pry the stone from Diablo's dentally challenged noggin. The poor lad Diablo had possessed is free (to die). At least I got what I came for.



### HOW TO GET THERE:

No cheats will get you through the levels.

### IN THE END:

By the time you get to Diablo you'll already be calling Death itself your bitch, so the real payoff comes in the final movie, which will have you dreaming of *Diablo II* for months to come.

Chicks will dig this huge gem jammed in my forehead, I'm sure of it.

## DÉSCENT: FREESPACE

When the Shivans show up, they interrupt a long-standing blood feud between us and the Vasudans. At first we are glad to see them mop up space with their fleet, but we quickly learn that the Shivans are looking to cleanse the universe of both Human and Vasudan alike. Soon Vasudan and Human work together, and jointly our scientists develop technology with which to successfully fight the Shivans. The joint forces start to shift the course of the battle, but the Shivan supreme battleship Lucifer is en route to Earth and we have only one shot to nail it. Lucifer is vulnerable in hyperspace, so we hit it there as hard as we can. By concentrating fire on its engines, we were able to destroy it just as it reached Earth. We lost our jump point to Earth, but with our Vasudan brothers we will rebuild and explore space, both tougher and wiser for generations to come, we assume.

### HOW TO GET THERE:

The cheats won't let you go on to the next mission, which leaves you kinda screwed. To see this ending, you are going to have to play through it all on your lonesome, poor baby.

### IN THE END:

You spend the whole game crappy-pants scared of Lucifer, so taking it out at the end is not only a great finale, but it redeems your sense of self-worth.



Just putting the finishing touches on the Lucifer, then leaving hyperspace.



Only half the ship makes it through into real space, and that's not healthy.



Back on Earth, it's Miller time.



CATHERINE ZETA JONES  
If they sold a "special edition" of *Entrapment* with just this one scene looped, it would still sell like hotcakes

# END OF GAMES

END OF GAMES



**JENNIFER LOPEZ:**  
By merely turning her back to you, she proves "less is more" is utter hogwash

## DUKE NUKEM 3D

When you first hear "I'm Duke Nukem!" you know what's coming. One part Ash from *Evil Dead* and 10 parts *Rombo*. It was bad enough that those damned aliens pulled him out of a TV interview to side-scroll his way through *Duke Nukem II*, but now that he's kicked their asses and returned to Earth, he finds out they've taken over the whole damn planet! Worse, they've taken all the girls! He lands in L.A., of course, and fights his way through space stations, subways, movie theaters, and everything in between. When he says, "Nobody steals our chicks — and lives!" brother, he means it! When he finally reaches the alien big boss, it takes the hundreds of pounds of ammo he's collected to send that alien bastard straight back to hell.



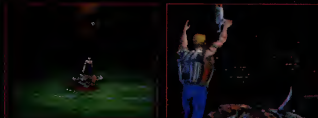
I already crapped down your pal's neck ...



... so I guess you get what I like to call ...



... "catching the red-eye!"



Now, I just need some R & R and I'll be ready for some more action!

### HOW TO GET THERE:

"DNCSCOTTY309" will take you to the final boss. "DNCORNHOLIO" will keep you from getting instantly killed. "DNSTUFF" will give you what you need to pop that busta in the jingles.

### IN THE END:

Although the Duke field goal is good stuff, hearing the final dialog is unforgettable ...

DUKE: (sounding cool as ever) "It's time for some R&R and then I'll be back for some more action!"

HOT CHICK: "But Duuuke, I want some action ... NOW!!!"

DUKE AND CHICK: "moan" AHHH yeaahhh "moan" ooooh Ha ha!"

## BATTLEZONE

When a meteor shower in the Bering Straits provides the discovery of biometal (a material from which machines of awesome power can be constructed), the superpowers of the day look to the stars and prepare to fight for control of this über-resource. In our exploration we discover alien ruins and artifacts. Leave it to those dirty red commie bastards to take the alien technology and build alien craft out of it that no one could control. Their prototypes go berserk and we are forced to fight alongside them just to have a chance against the so-called "furies." We finally learn that sometimes you have to blow up the planet to save it.



First, let's make sure this alien crap doesn't get off the planet.



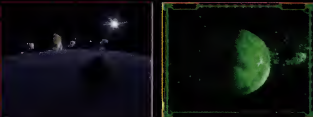
Now let's make sure we get off the planet.



Bye-bye planet. Bye-bye problem.



I guess no one notices this huge chunk of biometal flying off.



The biometal scans and replicates this planet and it's time for BZ2.

### HOW TO GET THERE:

"bzboby" makes you invulnerable. "bzntnt" give you unlimited ammo. Type "I AM A DIRTY CHEATER" at the mission select screen to choose any mission and get straight to the end.

### IN THE END:

The contrast in quality between the stunning 3D graphics and the miserable end scene sucks some of the victory juice away from what would have been a satisfying ending.

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ONE GALAXY AT A TIME.

"...one of the most detailed, in-depth, far  
reaching space conquest games ever."  
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Animated Violence

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The logo for 'High Heat Baseball 2001' features the words 'HIGH HEAT' in a large, bold, metallic font with a yellow-to-orange gradient. Below this, 'Baseball' is written in a red, cursive script. At the bottom, '2001' is displayed in a white, blocky font with a red outline, set against a red and white swoosh background.

# HIGH HEAT Baseball 2001

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# END OF GAMES

END OF GAMES



ANNA KOURNIKOVA  
I don't get it — we can put a man on the moon, but we still can't perfect a frickin panty disintegrator ray

## WARCRAFT II

When the Dark Portal opened, the humans in Azeroth fell like Frenchmen to the bloodthirsty horde of orc warriors. In *Warcraft II*, you play either the human or orcs side and vie for control of the human world. Choose the human side and you follow Lord Lothar on a campaign to reclaim the lands of Azeroth from the orcish pig-dog invaders. You leave Lordaeron and recruit the elves and dwarves (the RPG kind, not the "tossing" kind) to help push the foul horde back to their dark portal and then destroy it.

On the orcish side, Ogrim Doomhammers, commands lead you to victory across the lands between Azeroth and Lordaeron. When Gul-Dan the Warlock betrays the clans, you cover yourself in his lifesblood in vengeance (messy, but intense). You grind the elves to butter and send your dragons and death knights to destroy Lordaeron, earning yourself the rank of Warlord — and control of your own clan. Either way, when the end comes there is plenty of bloodshed.

### HOW TO GET THERE:

In the game, hit RETURN then type either "there can be only one" to view the final campaign video, or "unite the clans" to win the mission. Zug Zug!

### IN THE END:

The Orc ending is better if you like hacking your enemies limb from limb. The human ending is better if you like sissy mages and pretty lights.



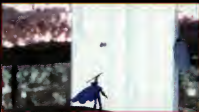
There's the Dark Portal!



Abacadabra!



The "Ion Cannon" spell rocks.



The Dark Portal is no longer.



YAAARGG! Destroy Lordaeron!



Find king. Kill king. Drink beer!



The last thing the king ever sees.



The final human castle destroyed.

www.dailymotion.com

Matt refused to write about the end of Half-Life because "the Xen levels are collections of greased stool"

50



Malochio's digs. Groove crashes Tony's party to stay crashed.



Instead of completing my plan and blowing you all to hell, I'll be an idiot and let you go.



"I'll give you whatever you want! Money! Power!" "I want my sister, bitch."

## INTERSTATE 76

Check it out. Gas stations all around the southwest are getting jacked. This fine-ass freak Jade was working with this dude Taurus to stop them, but she gets wasted by these high-octane punks on the freeway. But Jade is Groove Champions sister, dig? He cold jumps in his ride and goes gunning for some revenge — and I do mean gunning. In no time he figures out who's the kingpin: Antonio Malochio — very rich, very powerful, in possession of a very explosive H-bomb, and very much on Groove's hit list. Turns out Tony was being paid by OPEC to blow up the biggest oil reserve in the USA. Well, Groove crashes in on Tony's base to stop him, but instead gets captured (along with his friends too, damn!). But trip on this — he doesn't kill Groove! Instead he gives Groove a chance to kill him in just one more autoduel. Of course Groove gives him a hot-lead sandwich and just when Tony's begging for his life, Groove empties his piece into his ugly face. And that's the truth, Ruth.

### HOW TO GET THERE:

Hold CTRL-SHIFT and type "GETDOWN." When you die, you'll go to the next mission. CTRL-ALT-X makes impatient players explode immediately.

### IN THE END:

You save the U.S., rescue your friends, and smoke the bad guy. I'm the hero, damn it! Where's the girl?

## THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

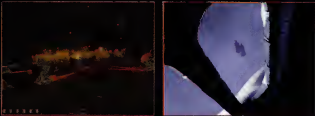
This game sucker-punched the FPS genre by swapping the standard double-barreled shotgun and armor with a blackjack and deep shadows. Playing as Garrett, thief extraordinaire, your goals throughout the game are to avoid combat and 10-finger discount everything you can. You are offered a job to retrieve an ancient artifact, "The Eye," by a man named Constantine and you hope to retire on the reward. Surprise, surprise, he is actually an ancient and evil god (the Trickster) who needs the artifact and your actual eye to complete a ritual which will open a portal and destroy the world. But, with the help of your old trainers, the Keepers, you manage to sneak up on Constantine and swap "The Eye" with a fake. The Trickster completes the ritual only to discover that fake relics and ancient rituals don't mix. Now that he's dead, you tell the Keepers to scam and go your own way — but not before they warn you of the coming "metal age."



The Trickster revealed. Caught by the long arm of the freak.



It was all fun and games until I lost my eye. I learn that when combined, my eye and "The" Eye make one powerful relic.



In a powerful ancient ritual, fake eye, real Eye, what's the difference? Oh yeah, fake eyes make the ritual blow up in your damn face.



Now that's over, you tell the Keepers I'm done. DONE.

### HOW TO GET THERE:

We challenge you to find the codes that let you skip missions and become totally invisible. Oh, while you're at it, find the one that makes Anna Kournikova's panties disappear. The chances of finding either of these are about the same — we know this from experience.

### IN THE END:

The cutscenes in *Thief* are so good that they almost steal the show. The final movie is not just beautiful, but also gives closure to the masterful plot Looking Glass delivers.

## GABRIEL KNIGHT 2

Having settled into his ancestral home of Schloss Ritter, Gabriel the Schattenjäger is asked by the locals to investigate murders believed to have been the work of werewolves. Gabriel and his assistant Grace track down the beasts to a Munich hunting club led by the charismatic Von Glower. Gabe discovers that one of the members, Von Zell, is a werewolf and kills him, but not before being bitten himself. He realizes that Von Glower is The Black Wolf (or head werewolf) who wants to make Gabe his new partner in crime. Later, Grace and Gabe find a Wagner opera designed to force a werewolf transformation, and invite Von Glower to the opening night production. In Act III, the opera ends abruptly for Gabe and Von Glower wolf out and flee to the basement catacombs for the final showdown.



Gabe traps Von Glower in the furnace room just as Police Chief Leber and Grace burst in. Leber gets ready to shoot.



After seeing Gabriel motion towards the furnace, Grace knows what he has in mind and opens the grate. Von Glower readies his attack.



Von Glower is knocked into the furnace in mid-jump by Gabriel. Grace stops Leber from shooting Gabriel after he runs off.



At Schloss Ritter, Gabe admits he admired Von Glower's primal nature, but not his blood lust. Grace and he share a tender moment.

### HOW TO GET THERE:

In the end, cheaters only cheat themselves.

### IN THE END:

The ending didn't make me cry — well, not really, except for that part about Grace leaving Gabriel and going back to college, which reminded me of an episode of "Felicity."

END OF GAMES



KARI WAHNER  
You might recognize her from the 7-Eleven commercials. But does it really matter who she is? In our opinion this is The End.

see page 108

If you finished Recal/ write in the ending to win a free copy of ... with ... Recal!

# Sound goods.

If you're searching for the best possible 3D audio experience, you can spend a lot of time listening to the claims of imitators. Or you can get the ultimate experience with A3D on a Vortex card from Aureal, the folks who invented 3D audio for the PC.

The Vortex SQ1500 delivers award-winning A3D on two or four speaker systems, or on headphones, and is the ideal choice for gamers on a budget.

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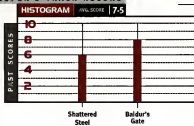
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## DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



## MDK2

No one knows what it stands for, but it sure is fun

**B**efore everyone decided to flood the market with third-person action/adventure games, Shiny Entertainment had a quirky attempt at a 3D platformer that came out just about the same time as the original *Tomb Raider*. It was called *MDK*, and it took Shiny's 2D side-scrolling console games

(they created *Earthworm Jim*) to the realm of 3D. It also rocked hard. If you missed it, feel very bad and go find a copy in a bargain bin now.

Finally, the *MDK* sequel is almost upon us, though original developers Shiny passed the torch to Bioware, best known for *Baldur's Gate*. The original *MDK* centered on a hero named Kurt Hectic, who

wore a super suit given to him by the eccentric inventor Doctor Hawkins, and was sent to stop city-sized alien Mine Crawlers from destroying unlikely targets (the home towns of many of the ex-pat English development team) on Earth. With this suit, Kurt could glide, thanks to a special ribbon chute on his back, and more importantly, he had a chaingun on his arm that could attach to his face. This enabled him to become an incredible sniper. The game allowed you to zoom in close enough to let you pop them ene-

mies dead with one shot through the eye.

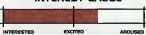
Kurt can still do all these things in the sequel, but this time he's not alone. Bioware's main attempt to give the game a distinction over its predecessor is to enable you to also play as Doctor Hawkins and Max — Hawkins' four-armed, cybernetically enhanced dog. Each character will have three specific levels, and the final level will let you choose which hero to use for the end game. The three distinctive characters will offer up different styles of gameplay — Kurt ▶ P. 55



## INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Bioware  
 PUBLISHER → Interplay Productions  
 RELEASE DATE → May  
 API SUPPORT → Glide, Open GL, Direct 3D

## INTEREST GAUGE



## THE HYPE

Sadistic, sniping, four-armed combat, goofy aliens, and that oh-so-Shiny style, even if it isn't Shiny at the helm. Early looks at this game are looking good. Let's hope word of mouth gets going soon.

## THE HURDLE

Unless you're one of the 12 people who bought and adored the original *MDK*, you might not see the significance of this game. Chances are, you, dear reader are among this non-appreciative group. For that you should feel guilty.

## THE HIT

The distinctive characters, locales, gameplay, and sense of humor should make this sequel as great as the original. And the original was really great. Even if you didn't buy it, loser.



The freaky main character from the original is back and now he's wearing purple to look even freakier than before.

**MDK2 GALLERY**

The Professor is weaker, but a super potion can turn him into a buffed-up monstrous killing machine. The effects are frighteningly similar to the effect vodka and "Whup-Ass" soda has on Mike Salmon.



Careful, you'll have someone's eye out.

Rob Smith argued relentlessly that MDK should win PC Games' "Game of the Year" three years ago ...

## 5 QUESTIONS

**BIOWARE HONCHO GREG ZESCHUK FACED THREATS OF MURDER, DEATH, AND BEING KILLED, OR ANSWER THE FIVE QUESTIONS.**

**Q: MDK2 — what's it stand for now?**

**A:** It depends on which day of the week that you ask the famed "question." Since it's Saturday, and we didn't have a chance to go out last night as we were working on MDK2, it stands for Massive Drinking Keg.

**Q: Are you going to include any Bioware "in jokes," like Sarevok appearing as the son of the god of donuts, or something?**

**A:** I guarantee we will put something in but it won't be until the absolute last minute (these types of things don't usually appear until the delicious final hours of development — after the talking carrots and dancing fish are added).

**Q: Are you using an all new engine, or parts from other Bioware games, or even the original MDK?**

**A:** The Bioware Omen Engine is completely new — it's been developed specifically for MDK2 and doesn't share any technology with the original MDK engine. It's a lot of work to make a new engine but it really is worthwhile, because games made with a new engine will have a completely unique "feel."

**Q: Did Bioware consider using Spice Girls for stealing your "Geek Power" motif and launching "Girl Power"?**

**A:** Not really — geeks and girls don't really mix well (unless there is a money catalyst involved) so we'd rather not pursue a case against the aforementioned individuals.

**Q: MDK didn't set the sales charts on fire. Why was that? And what's MDK2 going to do to make sure it doesn't happen again?**

**A:** That's one of the mysteries of MDK — it's rare that to see a game get so much critical acclaim and not sell gangbusters. I can only speculate that MDK was perhaps too different and unusual for the general game buying public at the time. The press liked it because it truly represented an advance in gaming and it was really fresh — sometimes the public doesn't really care about (sad as it is) ... in essence it was ahead of its time. I also think that the lack of multiplayer hurt it at the time of its release because everyone was totally obsessed with multiplayer gaming.

People want to play games that will surprise and entertain them and so I think the time is perfect for a game like MDK2. Will it sell well? We're doing absolutely everything we can to make sure that it does.



**At this point a hit of acid might make things clear.**

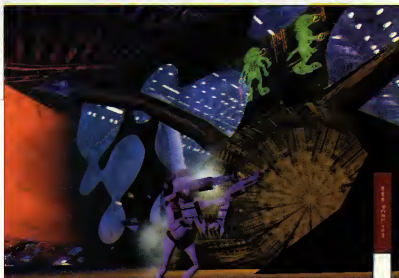
**▶ P. 53** is better at stealth and sniping, while Max is the bad ass action hero (he can literally hold a gun in each of his four arms, and has twice as much health as Kurt).

The Doctor has the least amount of health, and his levels focus more on puzzles, holding an item in each hand and combining them. Toasters and bread combine to shoot toast, while alcohol bottles and dirty towels make Molotov Cocktails, and a pen light and car battery can be turned into a laser — which, of course, you knew, didn't you, you little pyromaniac?

Another notable change is the inclusion of cinematic sequences, linking the levels that allow you to journey through Hawkin's spacecraft and alien spacecrafts. The game will sport over 40 items to collect and use, and while the exclusion of the original game's World's Most Interesting Bomb is tragic, Kurt's new Black Hole Grenade, bazookas, grenades, and Uzis should help assuage the loss.

Ensuring that there is consistency for the handful who were swept away by the original MDK, Kurt controls exactly as he did in the first. He can run, jump, glide, fall, snipe, and shoot. You'll even see some of the same strangely endearing aliens among the 20 different enemies. The series' dark, absurdist sense of humor is still intact, with bad guys that taunt you and levels that look like a bizarre cross between Looney Tunes, Dr. Suess and *Aliens*.

Pumping out of all this action is Bioware's own Omega engine, with a lot of neat bells and whistles such as a detailed particle system for awesome gibbing. Supporting the visuals is enemy AI that combines



**Everyone's favorite beagle is now a four-armed beast of destruction. "Fetch? Bite me."**

standard actions with scripted behavior, allowing them to perform more "intelligent" acts such as ambushing the player, running for help, and, of course, taunting.

Much like the original, MDK2 will be single-player-only — you won't hear any complaints here.

Bioware seems to have captured the spark, look, and feel of the original, and added its own creative

edge to make the sequel stand on its own. And besides, no matter what game, shooting your enemies through the eye from a half a mile away just never gets old.

— JASON D'APRILE *often wishes he had four arms and more computers so that maybe he could get his stories in on time. Or maybe for other things ...*

### ▶ KFC CAUGHT IN ACRONYM SCANDAL



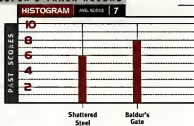
The latest rumor to circulate on the Internet is that KFC has managed to make a *Beaumont, Freddie, Featherless* mutant chicken that is fed via nutrient tube. They would have eaten away with it, too, if it wasn't for those damn meddling gods who told them, "No way, Jose!" and forced them to stop calling their food chicken. "Kentucky Fried Chicken" changed into KFC, got married to Taco Bell, and the Colonel started rapping. So goes the story. Now, since eating chicken is good and eating freshish mutant chicken best is bad, we rushed to the nearest KFC to scoldize the menu, grill the employees, and gobble Crispy Strips in an effort to discover the

truth. Only one place did we see the word "chicken" on the menu and the dubious wording of "BBO Chicken favorites" made us eyeball our strips. Noticing that the television ads also make no mention of chicken, we were forced to conclude that KFC is in fact serving up cooked, mutated poultry. The real horror is that the damn stuff sure was finger-lickin' good.

KFC answered the question of which came first ... "Neither!"



## DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



# Baldur's Gate II

Get ready for a bigger, badder, and bolder *Baldur's Gate*

If you consider Interplay's been sitting on the third best-selling PC game of '99 (trailing behind Maxis' *SimCity 3000* and Hasbro's *RollerCoaster Tycoon*), it doesn't take a brain surgeon to figure out a sequel can't be too far behind. D&D nerds and Computer RPG aficionados (who are also nerds) rejoice! *Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn* is in the works.

This epic sequel takes place just a few short weeks following the events in *Baldur's Gate* and, geographically, it focuses on the southern merchant kingdom of the Sword Coast, dubbed Amn (pronounced "Om"). Your party will trapse through lush, hand-drawn environments such as the Cloud-

peak Mountains, the heavily-forested Elven city of Tethir, as well as Amn's capital city of Athkatla. Naturally, there will also be varied astral planes to visit, including Hell itself (affectionately known as "the Abyss").

This time around, there will be 15 new NPC characters willing to join your party, all of whom will

interact with each other. For instance, two characters in the party may form an intimate relationship or perhaps betray each other, which can affect the party's morale either way. This is primarily carried out through extensive dialogue. In fact, each character in *Baldur's Gate II* has more chatter than all those in the first game put

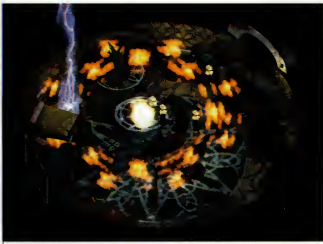
together. Furthermore, along with the eight classes and seven races from which to choose (including the eagerly anticipated Half-Orc), there are also 24 new player kits and classes for added customizability (and thus, replayability) allowing you to become a Warrior, or perhaps a Kensai Warrior with beefed-up swordsmanship. Traditional AD&D skills have also been added, such as Hide in Shadows, Move Silently, Detect Illusion, Set Traps, and so forth.

*Baldur's Gate II* will also house hundreds of new creatures (compared to 60 in *Baldur's Gate*), plus hundreds of usable items, new weapons and 130 new spells (totaling over 300 now) including Time Stop and Spell Turning, the latter serving as a magic reflector back at its caster.

Graphically, the game looks almost the same as its precursor since it still uses the same BioWare Infinity engine. Resolutions have been upgraded to 800x600 at 16-



Thanks to support for 3D acceleration, check out the reflective surfaces and enhanced lighting in this shot.



You talkin' to me? You can pause the action to re-strategize your particular situation.

## INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → BioWare  
 PUBLISHER → Interplay  
 RELEASE DATE → Fall 2000  
 API SUPPORT → GDI, OpenGL

## INTEREST GAUGE



## THE HYPE

Interplay's *Baldur's Gate* was a huge success, both critically and commercially. Plus, this epic sequel still focuses on TSR's *Forgotten Realms*, the most popular campaign in the AD&D universe.

## THE HURDLE

Everybody's jumping on the RPG bandwagon. Will we experience the same oversaturation as we did with RTS games in '98? Also, the lack of Direct3D support will likely upset many a gamer running non-3Dfs cards.

## THE HIT

BioWare isn't deviating much from its award-winning formula (nor should they), but they're adding just enough gameplay and visual/interface tweaks to come out a winner once again.

## ▶ WE'D LIKE TO SEE ...

Let's face it, there certainly is no shortage of computer roleplaying games on the market these days — across all platforms. Here's yet another list of what PCXL would like to see more of:

SEX → OK, it may not be much of a turn-on to see a naked sprite from an isometric perspective, but we're perverts and we'll take what we can get.

QUALITY VOICE ACTING → Some RPGs employ voice-over talent not much better than porn star acting. If you want to make the game more immersive, hire pro talent, folks.

COOL MUSIC → Some RPGs of late contain cheesy, repulsive soundtracks, most of which make you wish you were chewing tin foil (with braces). Please throw a bit of cash for better music — it goes a long way.

BUG-FREE GAMES? → I know this one's a bit of a stretch ... but no one should have to pay to be a beta tester. Origin, are you listening?



Pathfinding AI will be significantly improved in this sequel.

## 5 QUESTIONS

**DR. RAY MUZYKA, JOINT CEO AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER AT CANADIAN DEVELOPERS BIOWARE, TALKS WITH PCXL "ABOUT" BALDUR'S GATE II, EH.**

**Q:** How do you top a million-unit seller? Any pressure?

**A:** Yes, there's a lot of pressure, but the team at BioWare is really enjoying the challenge. In particular, we see the sequel as an opportunity to incorporate a lot of great suggestions that we've received from our fans.

**Q:** What's the reason for *Baldur's Gate II* supporting OpenGL/Glide chipsets and not DirectX?

**A:** We will definitely be considering other modes as well (which are optional by the way — we don't require a 3D accelerator card to play the game). The additional 3D support utilizes spell and special effect graphics specifically designed for 3D, to make the game look visually that much more appealing.

**Q:** Is there a "Canadian" difference?

**A:** Like, take off, eh! That's an interesting question, actually. It's always seemed that Canadians are half-way between the European way of doing things and the American way. Both approaches are valid, and we seem to be able to relate well to both of them.

**Q:** Can you believe you really left your job as a (no doubt well-paid) family physician to make games?

**A:** No, because I still occasionally work as a family doc, actually. It's a great hobby, but because it took eight years to acquire the skills required, I can't recommend it as a hobby for most people!

**Q:** Who's sexier: Mary Ann or Ginger? The professor, perhaps?

**A:** I'd have to say (not that I remember that show too well) that it would probably be Ginger. I seem to recall Mary Ann was cute too though. As far as the professor — he's right out of that selection, for me at least!

bit color and there's optional support for OpenGL and possibly the Glide API to add alpha blending, translucency, transparencies, reflective surfaces, and increased speed. (Apparently there are no plans for a DirectX9 version or patch just yet.)

And speaking of speed, traveling will be streamlined so there's less dead time between action. Plus there's an annotated map now to jot down notes, a completely revamped journal listing, and the overall graphical user interface has been tweaked (based on feedback collected from vocal supporters). For example, players now can remove the entire interface altogether and use the mouse and keyboard hotkeys exclusively if they so desire.

While the single-player game is estimated at roughly 200+ hours (gulp!), the Internet and LAN game has been undergoing considerable attention to make sure none of the annoying niggles found in *Baldur's Gate* will exist in this follow-up. A cooperative mode will be available and while it hasn't been confirmed as of yet, possibly a head-to-head multiplayer mode.



Creatures are bigger this time, with plenty of cool animations for attacking and death sequences.



Creatures will take the more logical route from point A to B now.

Other features planned for this mammoth RPG include the option to write your own dossier/history for newly created characters (to truly make the game your own), improved pathfinding AI for the party, much larger and smarter enemies (with cooler animations), and of course, the option to import saved characters from *Baldur's Gate* as well as the *Tales of the Sword Coast* expansion pack.

Any way you slice it, *Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn* looks to be on course for classic status, with enough depth slapped on top

of its celebrated predecessor to ensure many sleepless nights, marital spats, and pink slips. ➤

— MARC SALTZMAN *just hates Baldur's Gate II doesn't experience delays like Diablo II*





Battle of Tatooine

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1



### General Veers

**Served:** Battle of Yavin, Battle of Sarapin, Battle of Ruul, Battle of Hoth (wounded), Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (captured)

2



### 2nd Lieutenant Gorga

**Served:** Battle of Yavin (wounded), Battle of Hoth, Battle of Abridon, Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (killed)

3



### Sergeant Krung

**Served:** Battle of Hoth, Battle of Abridon, Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (missing in action)

4



### Sergeant Major Corillon

**Served:** Battle of Yavin (wounded), Battle of Sarapin (wounded), Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (killed)

5



### Lieutenant Major Antilles

**Served:** Battle of Yavin, Battle of Sarapin, Battle of Ruul (wounded), Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (wounded)

6



### 1st Lieutenant Spiker

**Served:** Battle of Abridon, Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (promoted)

STATISTIC? IT'S UP TO YOU.

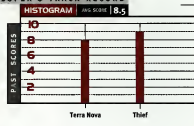
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## DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



# Thief 2: The Metal Age

You can never have too much fun in the dark

**W**e all knew damn well that Garrett would be back — the end of *Thief* did everything but say it outright. Picking up one year after the sneaky experiences he had with *The Trickster* in the original *Thief*, an eager Garrett gets back to his honest life of robbing people.

But wouldn't you know it?

There's a new sheriff in town and he's pulling a Guillani on the seedy side of the city. The poor and dispossessed are disappearing, shady businesses are being closed down, and worst of all, his long arm of the law is reaching for Garrett's throat. Our hero may have thought the Hammerites were tough, but a new splinter faction, the Mechanists, are leaving humanity behind, so get ready to fight robots and sentry turrets. At least you won't be fac-

ing those annoying zombies and spiders again.

In *Thief*, lurking in the dark in the dead of night looking for things to nick certainly appealed to us, so naturally we expected new and more nefarious activities in the sequel. Looking Glass' track record of excellent game design decisions makes it well prepared to deliver the goods. In *Thief 2*, the designers

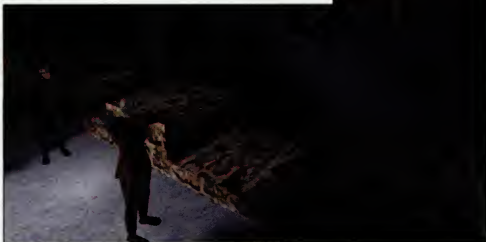
give you the opportunity to kidnap someone else for the crime, protect innocents from assassins (without letting them see you) and the ability to eavesdrop, so you can listen through doors to get information without putting yourself in harm's way. The AI has been given an egghead potion, so now you can expect guards to work together

effectively, presenting a greater challenge as a team that they did individually. Sword-wielding guards won't stand around while you pop them with arrows anymore — they'll go and fetch an archer to take you out. If a guard decides to run, he won't just run a short distance, he'll keep moving and force you to risk revealing yourself to other guards.

Those who played *Thief* will remember the somewhat dated graphics engine when the game came out. The *Thief 2* team has listened to fans and is spring-boarding off the *System Shock 2* engine, landing on the set with modern 3D goodies. With 16-bit color, all-new textures, dynamic colored lighting, and higher poly-count models, this beautiful baby will blow the dust off the old Dark Engine, and bring the graphics up to par. (Unfortunately, we were still a little underwhelmed by the clunky look in some areas.)



"Mom, I'm sorry about the blood all over the fancy carpet." Sometimes you need to put the guard's lights out, instead of the room.



The medieval L.A. level comes fully stocked with trash-talkin', arrow-slingin' crips and bloods. No word on whether Jennifer Lopez and their other girlfriends make appearances.

## INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Looking Glass  
 PUBLISHER → Eidos  
 RELEASE DATE → March 2000  
 API SUPPORT → D3D, Glide

## INTEREST GAUGE



## THE HYPE

We learned in the original *Thief* that sneaking around and stealing stuff is good. But *Thief 2* shows us that blackmail, kidnapping, and spying is better.

## THE HURDLE

*Thief* rocked the boat. Will fancy new features and improved visuals added to the same gameplay keep it rockin' or make players seasick?

## THE HIT

Looking Glass eats, breathes, and sleeps solid, deep, single-player game design. Toss in new graphics and they've pretty much got it all.





In the Metal Age, colored lighting is quite popular.

## 5 QUESTIONS

**STEVE PEARSALL, PROJECT DIRECTOR FROM THE ORIGINAL THIEF, COMES TO THE SHADOWS FOR A MOMENT TO ANSWER THESE FIVE QUESTIONS.**

**Q: What background material did you use for this game?**

**A:** Fritz Leiber's *Fofhrd*, Grey Mouser books, and Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*. We used to have "Thief Movie Night" where we watched a number of films for inspiration. Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and *M*, the Orson Wells film *The Third Man*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*, all had some effect on the look.

**Q: Were any of the top-tier engines (Quake, Unreal Tournament) considered for Thief 2?**

**A:** We talked about it, but our unique object system and AI can do things that no other engine can do. When we looked at how long it would take to graft these onto their renderer and multiplayer sub-systems, we just couldn't make the schedules and budgets work out.

**Q: The Thief world seems ideal for multiplayer gaming. Is there any chance of seeing this in the future?**

**A:** Balancing good multiplayer levels while making sure that *Thief 2* is a strong single-player game would be a lot to tackle. Also, parties of thieves lurking around bring up new aspects of gameplay (i.e., how much is the noise level increased?) that we're still chewing on.

**Q: If Catherine Zeta-Jones was a Keeper, would Garrett reinjoin them?**

**A:** Why don't you guys send her to Looking Glass and we'll see how it works out! Though the five women working on *Thief 2* said they prefer Ralph Fiennes.

**Q: What is a Taffer and where did the word come from?**

**A:** One of our designers, Laura Baldwin, made it up. Taffer was meant to be a slang word that meant a common criminal, but has evolved into meaning any sort of low life.

Some of the new levels in *Thief 2* are much bigger and more detailed, incorporating ambient features such as steaming pipes and dimly-lit skylights. The awesome soundscape that made *Thief* such a rectum-tightening nail-biter is back with all-new (forgive me) bells and whistles. By using occlusion and reflection effects in EAX, walls and doors will now muffle sounds and carry them, so you'll have a better idea of where those clumsy guards are moving as you rob your victims blind.

The dialog has also been tightened and will work into the actual game focus more effectively. The often lengthy conversations people have around you will be much more important this time around, since the information you overhear might save your life — or be a mission objective.

From the early build of the game that we witnessed, *Thief 2* is, thankfully, not simply "more of the same" that made the original such a compelling and interesting direction shift for first-person gaming. It's not a radical overhaul, but *Thief's* quality is in the way it plays and feels — the nervous excite-



Garrett's about to give this guy a headache he'll never forget.



It's gonna be tough to hide in the shadows here.

ment of being a heroic klepto. In this case, the old "if it ain't broke don't fix it" adage isn't such a bad thing. So, while the graphics engine fixes are certainly welcome, it's the nature of the stealthy gameplay and a new, malevolent,

medieval, mechanical enemy that gives *Thief 2* a chance to rise above the dreaded "sequel as add-on pack" syndrome.

— MATT HOLMES *considers himself a stealer of hot chicks' hearts*

## REPEAT OFFENDERS

Leave it to PCXL to figure out another way to work Laetitia Costa into a computer game preview feature. Guess we're repeat offenders, too.

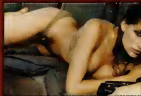


### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

**THE HEIST** → \$1.8 trillion in taxes, about \$80 billion more than is needed to operate the already bloated, festering federal government

**THE BUST** → Americans' collective asses, every time they get their paychecks

**THE PUNISHMENT** → A sub-sonic grumbling every Friday



### LAETITIA COSTA

**THE HEIST** → Our hearts, our minds, and (we wish) something else

**THE BUST** → What are you, blind?

**THE PUNISHMENT** → Routine spankings from "spankmaster" Eric

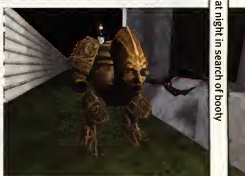


### PUFF DADDY

**THE HEIST** → Just about everyone else's music ever made

**THE BUST** → Listen to The "Boyz Greatest Hits" and you'll get all that "Puff" music without the annoying "Puff" voice

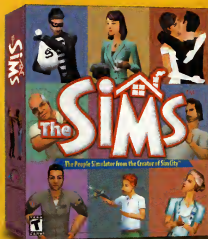
**THE PUNISHMENT** → Force him to pay back royalties to everyone he's ripped off, then laugh when he goes broke



THIEF 2

Garrett's not the only one who likes sneaking around at night in search of booty

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Fast or

# Fiction

Valve Makes A PowerPlay For Your Modem

**A**fter seeing a demo of *Team Fortress 2* at last year's E3 and hearing that Valve thought it was possible to bring a combination of multiplayer action and voice communication to home users struggling with 56K and slower modems, we wondered if the guys behind *Half-Life* had had one too many Tequila Sunrises the night before. It seemed impossible, but that's because they knew something we didn't — and it wasn't how to get wacked at E3. (That's pretty easy, actually.)

Enter PowerPlay. With the help of Internet infrastructure giant Cisco Systems (not to be confused with lard giant Crisco) and an as-yet unnamed national ISP (probably Earthlink, MSN, or AOL), PowerPlay 1.0 is "a set of protocols and deployment standards for Internet consumer entertainment." It's designed to give dial-up (and eventually DSL and cable modem) customers a multiplayer experience comparable to one they'd experience over a LAN — or so Valve claims. Gamers can sign up for a free one-month subscription with the ISP and test it out themselves

some time in Q3 2000. "Giving gamers a free copy of PowerPlay-enhanced *Team Fortress* and a free month of PowerPlay service will let them see the progress we've made so far," says Gabe Newell, managing director of Valve. Even non-optimized games should see a performance boost due to router enhancements.

PowerPlay 2.0 will be out later in the year and feature a new set of open specifications. Several high-profile developers have already jumped on the bandwagon, including BioWare, Epic, Red Storm, Ritual, and Shiny. Improvements are to include the integration of voice and multicast IP, a PowerPlay modem standard, and further quality enhancements. Adds Newell, "PowerPlay 2.0 will benefit from the broader participation and deployment of an open standards initiative." As envisioned, PowerPlay will become an industry standard for online game connections.

But, what exactly is PowerPlay? We know data compression is involved, but the source code isn't



"Hey, who the hell you think you're talkin' too?"

open, not even to developers interested in using it. While Id isn't a supporter ... yet ... Valve was happy to tell us how John Carmack was so excited by the possibilities that he volunteered to rewrite the Linux TCP/IP stack. Not true, Carmack says, adding, "They couldn't give me enough specific technical details to support it," and "at this point, there isn't anything actually there, just an intention to improve gaming." While the PowerPlay standard will be available to any ISP wanting to become certified, expensive server-side hardware upgrades might keep small ISPs

from taking part. (The exact cost wasn't revealed but Newell says the initial ISP made a multi-million dollar investment.)

Whether PowerPlay can deliver on Valve's promises remains to be seen. The first PowerPlay ISP's identity will probably be known by the time you read this and one-month trials will start without any prior testing, which could make for some very busy servers. We do know one thing for certain — more gamers than ever before will be playing *Team Fortress* and that means a lot of free advertising for Valve's *Team Fortress II*. ▶

## The High Cost

Gamers Get What They Pay For

# of Free Computers

**E**ver since our mummies warned us about taking candy from strangers, we've been suspicious of free gifts. "Free" usually comes with a price, whether it be time, hidden costs, or just granting the giver a license to annoy the hell out of you. So, when all the "Free Computer" ads started polluting our Sunday advertising pullouts, we wondered what the fuss was about. And, more importantly, how well built

are these freebie machines? Will they run all your games?

Here are the facts: At the time of this writing, the average "free" system (after store credits) costs at least \$400 plus sales tax. It becomes "free" with a \$400 rebate offered by Compuserve or an instant credit from MSN that requires the buyer to sign up for three years of Internet service (at the cost of \$21.95 per month, which adds up to \$790.20). Of course, there are cheaper services

out there and with purchase you're locked into a three-year deal that can't be broken unless the credit is repaid. (California and Oregon residents take note: MSN recently stopped their instant credit program because of a loophole that allowed new users to cancel at any time and keep their full credit. Poor MSN was shocked that people would take advantage of them!)

A typical "free" system, such as the E-machine 433i, comes with a Celeron 433MHz processor, 32MB

RAM, 4.3GB hard drive, 40x CD-ROM drive, 56K modem, cheap speakers, 4MB ATI Rage Pro Turbo 3D card, Crystal 3D sound card, and no monitor. The problem lies in the lack of RAM and the sound and video cards built in to the motherboard. Upgrades are limited by the lack of an AGP slot.

For better value, buy a system built for gamers or build one yourself. Get the most juice for your buck and remember that there's no such thing as a free computer. ▶

# System Shock

Buying a PC over the Internet doesn't mean you have to go with a Dell, Gateway, or Falcon. There are plenty of lesser-known companies out there anxious to get your hard-earned dollar with systems made specifically for gamers. Here's a couple we suckered ... oops ... acquired from Future Power and PC Outfitters.



## Future Power Who ya callin' tiny, beeyatch?! Power Series

**PRICE** → \$1649 w/o monitor,  
\$2049 w/ 19" monitor  
**WEBSITE** → [www.futurepowerusa.com](http://www.futurepowerusa.com)  
**BUNDLE** → Windows 98, Norton AntiVirus,  
Voodoo3 game bundle

It's about time PC manufacturers stopped treating consumers as if we had nothing better to do than generate spreadsheets and dive into the newest ultra-exciting edition of Quicken instead of Quakin. So, we were overjoyed when we got Future Powers' Power Series for gamers, a PIII 500Mhz system with an AGP Voodoo3 3000, 128MB SDRAM, 20GB hard drive, and Future Power's own New Q Gold digital stereo amplifier and equalizer. Not exactly a powerhouse, but a solid mid-range system.

Though we're always a little wary of equalizers and their flashy

digital readouts (since they always seem to be the first thing to break on a new machine), the New Q really spices up the system's vanilla Creative Labs Ensoniq 1373 audio card. With separate music settings ranging from rock to classical, it's an MP3 addict's dream. It also has microphone and headphone jacks → good call, since the woefully inadequate Altec Lansing speakers' intermittent crackling left us reaching for a headset.

Besides a Toshiba 6X DVD-ROM drive, the Future Power also comes with a 100MB NEC zip drive (compatible with the Iomega Zip disk standard) for storing odds and ends (or freaks and cheeks, if we're talking .jggs), though a CD-RW would have been great for the MP3 junkie or a beefier tape drive for those few sensible souls who actu-

ally back up their data. There are two available ISA slots and an extra PCI slot in case you need to upgrade, but most everything you'll need is included. Unfortunately, we wish actually getting to its guts were a little easier since the casing needs to be removed to reach the motherboard.

Game performance is surprisingly good, even besting the

higher-end PC Outfitter machine in *Quake III* at 1024x768 resolution (though, at 16-bit color, since the Voodoo3 doesn't support 32-bit). It's just too bad that the motherboard's BX chipset doesn't support 4X AGP for when you want to upgrade to the next generation Voodoo5 or GeForce 256. For the money, though, the Future Power is a respectable choice. ➤

⚙️ BENCHMARKS	+ PLUSES
<b>SYSMARK 2000</b> Internet Content Creation → 105 Office Productivity → 104	+ Built-in sound equalizer + Good performance + Decent price
<b>3D MARK 2000</b> → 2353	- MINUSES
<b>QUAKE III</b> (800 x 600) → 50.4 (1024 x 768) → 36.3	- User-unfriendly casing - Crappy speakers
	<b>RATING</b> 7

## PC Outfitters It's not a PC, it's a studio apartment Custom System

**PRICE** → \$3799 (K7 700) to \$4199 (K7 800)  
**WEBSITE** → [www.pcoutfitters.com](http://www.pcoutfitters.com)  
**BUNDLE** → 3D Blaster Annihilator and  
SoundBlaster Live! Platinum game bundles

The first thing you notice with this setup is the gargantuan size of this system. It needs to fit under, not on your computer desk. To be fair, we should point out that PC Outfitters builds custom-made systems as well as sells individual parts, so the system we received is a sample unit and may not match the components you select. If you have limited space, go for the mid-tower case instead, but the roomy super tower is tops in upgradeability and ventilation, and can house a family of four comfortably (just kidding).

Our system came with an Athlon 700, 128MB SDRAM, a SoundBlaster Live! Platinum sound card, 38GB of Ultra DMA/66 hard drive space, Toshiba

6X DVD-ROM, a HP CD-RW drive, Cambridge Soundworks Desktop Theater 5.1 speakers, Creative 3D Annihilator, and a Mitsubishi Diamond Pro flatscreen monitor.

Unfortunately, as with the Future Power machine, the K7M motherboard doesn't support 4X AGP, so the Annihilator isn't really getting a full workout, but the rest of the components are top of the line.

In fact, the only problem we had during testing was with the Athlon processor, or more specifically, the lack of Athlon support. Before we could get 3DMark2000 to run, the AGP miniport driver had to be upgraded and one application in SYSMARK, Elastic Reality 3.1, wouldn't run at all. A new driver set for the Annihilator to supplement support for the Athlon was being readied before we went to press, so greater game performance may be around the corner. We hope so,

because *Quake III* frames rates were comparable to the less powerful Future Power machine. Let's face it, if you've got four grand to blow on a PC, you might just want to pop for the more stable PIII instead.

All in all, PC Outfitters makes a damn good (and damn large) system. And if you can think of a better one, they'll make that, too. ➤



⚙️ BENCHMARKS	+ PLUSES
<b>SYSMARK 2000</b> Internet Content Creation → 135 (not including Elastic Reality 3.1 test) Office Productivity → 140	+ Top-notch components + The tower case really towers
<b>3D MARK 2000</b> → 3879	- MINUSES
<b>QUAKE III</b> (800 x 600) → 55 (1024 x 768) → 34.3	- Motherboard doesn't support 4X AGP - Quirky Athlon support
	<b>RATING</b> 8

# Four 3D cards and a mouse...

Stop us if you've heard this one before

The next generation of non-Voodoo 3D cards is finally here. What do they want and how can you protect your family? We reveal the answers below ...

## Diamond Put a snake in your box Viper II

PRICE → \$299
WEBSITE → <a href="http://www.diamondmm.com">www.diamondmm.com</a>
BUNDLE → InControl Tools 99 plus a few game demos

S3 (now S3/Diamond) 3D chips haven't gotten much respect over the years, with opinions ranging from "Oh, that's bad" to "Wow, that's spectacularly awful." Yet, they keep plugging away. Diamond's new Viper II board, using the S3 Savage 2000 chip, could be the card to reverse S3's image as the Rodney Dangerfield of 3D graphics card manufacturers.

The Viper II comes with expected goodies like 32MB SDRAM, 32-bit color, hardware accelerated DVD playback, and TV-output. The very observant may notice that hardware Transform and Lighting (T&L) support is mentioned on the box, but since it won't be activated until

a future driver update, we suspect it's not as robust as GeForce T&L.

What Diamond does like to push is their S3 Texture Compression although it's currently only used in one (patched) game, *Unreal Tournament*. Another patch to add S3TC support to one (count 'em, one) *Quake III* level is expected in the future. S3TC does clean up textures a little and boost frame rates, but unless you're a UT fanatic, that's not enough reason to run out and buy a Viper II.

So, how does it play games? Well, for its comparatively low price, the Viper II isn't too shabby. 3DMark 2000's scores are the lowest of the bunch, but that's partially because the Viper II's T&L support, a feature 3DMark tests, hasn't been implemented yet. Its *Quake III* scores are much more encouraging, averaging just a few



Spot the difference: With S3TC ... without S3TC.

frames below the GeForce DDR boards. *Quake III*, however, occasionally experienced glitches, dropped textures, and hard crashes while running under the Viper II, a problem we didn't have with any of the other cards.

As with all Diamond cards, the excellent InControl Tools is here, but no full games. Still, at a list price of \$199, a full hundred bucks less than the next cheapest board, the Viper II may be a good alternative for gamers on a budget. ▶

BENCHMARKS	PLUSES
<b>PII-333</b> 3D MARK 2000 → 1161	+ Relatively cheap + S3 texture compression
<b>QUAKE III</b> (800 x 600) → 34.6 (1024 x 768) → 33.8	<b>MINUSES</b> - T&L support a mystery - Not as stable as the other boards
<b>PII-500</b> 3D MARK 2000 → 2221	<b>RATING ?</b>
<b>QUAKE III</b> (800 x 600) → 52.4 (1024 x 768) → 41.5	

## ATI Rage But does it also come ribbed Fury MAXX "for her pleasure"?

PRICE → \$299
WEBSITE → <a href="http://www.atl.com">www.atl.com</a>
BUNDLE → None

We're beginning to think that ATI needs some anger management counseling. Haven't you noticed that each new ATI card has an increasingly menacing moniker? We can't wait for their next card, the "ATI Totally Pissed Off," to hit the shelves. (Just kidding, guys, but feel free to steal ... err ... borrow the name.)

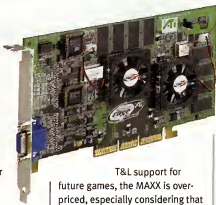
Enraged rebels that they are, ATI is the only chip manufacturer in this group to totally eschew T&L lovin' for right here/right now performance in their new Rage Fury MAXX. So if one Rage Pro card was good, they thought, then two should be fantastic, right? Well, that's pretty much what the MAXX is: Dual Rage 128 Pro accel-

erators, each with 32MB RAM, on one board using AFR (Alternating Frame Rendering) technology to alternate rendering frames in a method similar to SLI support found in Voodoo2 cards and delivering a maximum fill rate of 500 Megapixels/second.

In theory, a set-up like that should produce some blazing fast scores, but we started to get suspicious when ATI began calling us wondering what kind of system processor we would be testing the MAXX out on. It turns out that the MAXX is highly CPU-dependent - you don't begin to see really high performance unless you're running a super high-end machine, like a K7 800 or PIII 750 - and even then, scores are comparable with GeForce DDR boards. Since our tests using a PII 333 and PIII 500 produced unspectacular scores,

we don't recommend upgrading older PCs with this card.

Still, the MAXX is highly configurable, letting power users disable one of the Rage chips (for whatever reason) or customize both OpenGL and D3D settings. But at \$299, with no software bundle and no



T&L support for future games, the MAXX is overpriced, especially considering that you'll need a cutting-edge set-up to get the most out of it. ▶

BENCHMARKS	PLUSES
<b>PII-333</b> 3D MARK 2000 → 1169	+ Dual fans give off a nice breeze + Performance increases with CPU upgrades
<b>QUAKE III</b> (800 x 600) → 26.8 (1024 x 768) → 26.8	<b>MINUSES</b> - If you just bought a high-end machine, it probably came with a better 3D card
<b>PII-500</b> 3D MARK 2000 → 2776	<b>RATING 5</b>
<b>QUAKE III</b> (800 x 600) → 43.2 (1024 x 768) → 35.9	



## Creative Labs

### 3D Annihilator Pro

Is it true what they say about DDR boards? It's true! It's true!

PRICE → \$299

WEBSITE → [www.creative.com](http://www.creative.com)

BUNDLE → E-Color Colorific and 3Deep, InterVideo WinOVO, Evolve Scout, Need For Speed: High Stakes (full version)

We're lumping the two DDR boards together because both cards use the same NVIDIA GeForce 256 chipset with DDR RAM, though they offer slightly different drivers (DDR memory runs at double the clock speed — the standard 150MHz is doubled to 300MHz, compared to the 166MHz memory speed of the SDR boards). DDR, or Double Data Rate, RAM gets the most out of GeForce's quad-pipe architecture (four 64-bit pipes each

capable of processing a pixel at the same time). Techno-speak aside, DDR does deliver, surpassing the performance of the non-DDR GeForce boards, though not dramatically.

But, if you want the best, you'll have to pay for it. Both boards cost upwards of \$300, though we've seen some prices dip below that figure online. Expect to pay about \$50 more for DDR cards over their non-DDR counterparts. The Creative and Hercules boards



deliver similar

performance, though Guillemot's 3D Prophet had slightly better *Quake III* scores and the Annihilator Pro did better on the 3D Mark 2000 tests.

It all comes down to your needs. The Annihilator Pro has a much better bundle, including a full version of *Need For Speed: High*

PRICE → \$299 (after \$20 rebate)

WEBSITE → [www.guillemot.com](http://www.guillemot.com)

BUNDLE → Some game demos

Stokes. However, if you own a digital flat panel monitor or want to play games on your TV, then the 3D Prophet is the winner because it's the only card here to include both a DVI connection and TV-out.

One thing is certain, if you want the best card for your system, regardless of price, a GeForce 256 DDR board is the way to go. Even if games supporting T&L don't appear for months, they kick the 32MB, 32-bit colored stuffing out of the other guys — at least until the Voodoo 5's arrive.

#### BENCHMARKS

PII-333

3D MARK 2000 → 2892

QUAKE III (800 x 600) → 39.4  
(1024 x 768) → 36.6

PII-500

3D MARK 2000 → 3914

QUAKE III (800 x 600) → 54.3  
(1024 x 768) → 46.4

#### + PLUSES

- + Great bundle
- + T&L-supported games will show up one day

#### - MINUSES

- Expensive
- No DVI or TV out

RATING 9

#### BENCHMARKS

PII-333

3D MARK 2000 → 2600

QUAKE III (800 x 600) → 39.7  
(1024 x 768) → 37.8

PII-500

3D MARK 2000 → 3606

QUAKE III (800 x 600) → 56.2  
(1024 x 768) → 45.9

#### + PLUSES

- + DVI and TV out
- + T&L-supported games will show up one day

#### - MINUSES

- Not much of a bundle
- T&L isn't as cool as T&A

RATING 9

## Razer

Sensitivity training for gamers

### Boomslang

PRICE → \$69.99 or \$99.00

WEBSITE → [www.razerzone.com](http://www.razerzone.com)

BUNDLE → None

Whatever trackball users, joystick proponents, and even keyboard stalwarts tell you, there's just one dominant control method for first-person action games: Mouse and keyboard. Aiming to capture some of that market, Karna has introduced the Razer Boomslang. The ludicrous moniker is attached to new mouse technology that offers different degrees of sensitivity and aims to give gamers an edge in the deathmatch arenas.

The Boomslang comes in two flavors — the 1000dpi and 2000dpi models. The dots per inch (dpi) measurement is an indicator of the amount of data that the mouse tracks as it moves within an inch area on your mouse pad. As a qual-

ity guide, the standard mouse that probably came with your PC tracks at 400dpi. One thing that cannot be disputed about this mouse that is its sensitivity. At its highest level (adjusted in a decent software control package) it's virtually uncontrollable, with the merest of physical movements sending the mouse cursor whizzing across the screen like a flea on crack.

The next most important feature of the Boomslang is its distinctive shape. Design consultants contributed to its shape, and we kinda wish they hadn't. It's flat, black and long, and while it fits the hand comfortably when it's still, we found the fire button to be more awkward and less responsive than the rounded buttons on a standard mouse (in fact, the left button on one of our test samples broke just a few hours into testing). There are



action games, and this is the fastest mouse out there.

a total of five buttons (one is useless, but makes the mouse adaptable for both lefties and normal people) with the fourth placed conveniently and comfortably under the thumb.

In testing, when using this USB mouse with the optional PS/2 connector, we experienced occasional "quirks" whereby the mouse cursor would move suddenly and quickly down the screen. This happened at irregular intervals in both games and normal Windows function. However, in straight USB testing, the movement was consistent. The real benefit for gamers here is the sensitivity. Faster is better in

Certainly try it out in your hand before you buy. \$100 for the 2000dpi model is a significant investment, especially when the excellent Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer runs at least \$20 less.

#### + PLUSES

- + Hyper-sensitive
- + Dust protector helps consistent movement

#### - MINUSES

- Expensive
- Counter-intuitive button shape

RATING 5

# ALIENWARE

GAMING MACHINES

## HIVE-MIND

AMD Athlon 750MHz Processor w/3DNOW!  
High-Performance HeatSink/Cooling Fan  
AMD 750 Ironlake Motherboard w/5 PCI Slots  
256MB SDRAM (PC-133)  
Floppy Drive 1.44MB  
IBM Deskstar 22GX 13.5GB 7200RPM Hard Drive  
Hercules 3D Prophet GeForce 256 32MB DDR TV-Out  
Aureal Vortex II Super-Quad Sound Card  
Altec Lansing ACS54 Gaming Speaker  
Subwoofer System  
5X2 CD-ROM Player  
Black ATX Mid-Tower Case w/300 Watt PS  
Black 107-Enhanced Keyboard PS/2  
Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer  
US Robotics V30 56K Voice/Fax/Modem  
Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro  
Microsoft Windows '98 SE OS  
Free installation & configuration of  
favorite games & optimal drivers  
**PRICE: \$2,999.00**  
Financing starting at: \$97.99/Mo., 60 Mos.

## AREA 51 AURORA

AMD Athlon 800MHz Processor w/3DNOW!  
High-Performance HeatSink/Cooling Fan  
AMD 750 Ironlake Motherboard w/5 PCI Slots  
256MB SDRAM (PC-133)  
Floppy Drive 1.44MB  
IBM Deskstar 34GXP 22GB 7200RPM Hard Drive  
Hercules 3D Prophet GeForce 256 32MB DDR TV-Out  
Aureal Vortex II Super-Quad Sound Card  
Klipsch 4.1 ProMedia v2-400 THX  
400-Watt Subwoofer/Speaker System  
Pioneer 10X40X DVD Player  
HP 9100i CDR-W 8x4x32x CD Writer  
Black ATX Mid-Tower Case w/300 Watt PS  
Black 107-Enhanced Keyboard PS/2  
Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer  
US Robotics V30 56K Voice/Fax/Modem  
Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro  
Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad  
Microsoft Windows '98 SE OS  
Free installation & configuration of  
favorite games & optimal drivers  
**PRICE: \$3,999.00**  
Financing starting at: \$94.00/Mo., 60 Mos.

## AREA 51

Intel Pentium III 800MHz Processor SSE  
High-Performance HeatSink/Cooling Fan  
Intel 820 Chipset Motherboard w/5 PCI Slots  
SDRAM 128MB (PC-400)  
Floppy Drive 1.44MB  
IBM Deskstar 34GXP 22GB 7200RPM Hard Drive  
Hercules 3D Prophet GeForce 256 32MB DDR TV-Out  
Aureal Vortex II Super-Quad Sound Card  
Klipsch 4.1 ProMedia v2-400 THX  
400-Watt Subwoofer/Speaker System  
Pioneer 10X40X DVD Player  
HP 9100i CDR-W 8x4x32x CD Writer  
Black ATX Mid-Tower Case w/300 Watt PS  
Black 107-Enhanced Keyboard PS/2  
Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer  
US Robotics V30 56K Voice/Fax/Modem  
Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro  
Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad  
Microsoft Windows '98 SE OS  
Free installation & configuration of  
favorite games & optimal drivers  
**PRICE: \$3,699.00**  
Financing starting at: \$92.00/Mo., 60 Mos.

## MONITORS

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17" Viewsonic G772 26dp add: \$325.00  
17" Viewsonic E7903 26dp add: \$305.00  
19" Viewsonic G3790 26dp add: \$475.00  
19" Viewsonic PG790 26dp add: \$525.00  
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-Boot Magazine

"Performance was simply stunning"

-Computer Gaming World



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## REMEMBER: COMMIES DON'T GET CHOICES

First-person shooters seem to be taking over. UT and Q3 have monopolized our attention for the past month, with *Opposing Force* and *SWAT3* taking up what little time is left. But just at the moment you think that one genre has taken over the industry, a month like this one plants its foot in your back and shoves you into variety-land. Take a gander at this spread and tell us if it doesn't make you proud to be an American [Er, no — I'm English. Rob]. *Planescape: Torment* and *Odium* will keep RPG fans singing their elvish show tunes; action-adventures *Urban Chaos* and *Crusaders of Might and Magic* will delight those who can't get enough *Tomb Raider* (of which, naturally, there is more); and wargame grognards get to wrinkle their brows at *Diplomacy* and *Antietam!* Almost every type of game is here except flight sims, which are barred from PCXL, unless the liquor is flowing freely.



"First to pee on the fire wins."

## WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

Top of the heap, A #1, two in the bush, the bomb, almost as good as *Half-Life* **10**

Damn good, sweet, killer, a bird in the hand, well done — just shy of perfect **9**

Solid, worthy, fun, a keeper, still a good game **8**

Some good stuff, wouldn't push it out of bed for crumbs, we like it **7**

Nice, there's some fun in here, but those crumbs better be small **6**

Should I stay or should I go now? Either way is fine with us **5**

Faulty, I-don't-think-so, nice try, double-bag it, maybe on a rainy day **4**

Busted, broke, weak, better have thick beer goggles, not even on a rainy day **3**

Junk, crap, dodge it like a bullet, bunk-o, it better be raining fire and brimstone **2**

Not "the shit" — just plain shit. If you buy this, God will hate you **1**

## KILLER GAME

Any game that receives a 9 or so from our rigorous scoring system warrants this nifty logo. If you see the PC ACCELERATOR Killer Game stamp, you know it's a game worth buying. Only the true classics deserve this elite status, so don't expect to see this symbol often.



## SUICIDE

If we're going to create a stamp for the truly great, then it's only fair to label the unforfeitable shit as well. It takes an abominable score of a 1 or 2 to qualify for the abuse around the neck. Heed our warning: Stay away from these games at all costs.



## HALF-LIFE

The *Half-Life* of the world are a rare breed indeed. These games may not measure up to the master, but each has its own strengths which make it worthy of praise. A rare thing from PCXL.

## PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

Publisher → Interplay  
Developer → Black Isle Studios  
Rating → 9

How good is it? The best elements of *Fallout* and *Baldur's Gate* combined in one magical package. It's never been this good and we can only hope that *Baldur's Gate 2* takes us even further into The Land O' The Good And Righteous.

## URBAN CHAOS

Publisher → Eidos  
Developer → Mucky Foot  
Rating → 8

How good is it? Finally a city that lives and breathes action, with plenty of millennium-celebrating bad guys on which to get the proverbial medieval.

## SID MEIER'S ANTIETAM

Publisher → Firaxis Games  
Developer → Firaxis Games  
Rating → 8

How good is it? Is it possible for Sid to do wrong? Is he not a game design wizard? Is he blind as a bat?

## PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D

Sadly, the *Prince of Persia*'s of the world are an all too common breed. Not all of these games are the complete waste of time that was *POP3D*, but each of them has an undeniable odor of crap coming from the CD-ROM. It is our duty to you, our favorite reader, to tell you what games are a waste of your hard-earned money. Consider the following a complete waste.

## CRUSADERS OF MIGHT AND MAGIC

Publisher → 3DO  
Developer → 3DO  
Rating → 3

How bad is it? There's nothing in this flop you haven't seen before and didn't like the first time around.

## STAR TREK: HIDDEN EVIL

Publisher → Activision  
Developer → Presto Studios  
Rating → 4

How bad is it? The evil isn't hidden — it's right here in this box!

## DIPLOMACY

Publisher → Hasbro  
Developer → Meyer/Glass Interactive  
Rating → 3

How bad is it? The original board game was an intricate negotiations challenge. This just plain sucks.

## ACCELE-RATED &gt;&gt;

This additional rating provides specific information on how a game performs on a variety of competing 3D chipssets. We test games on up to four major 3D cards and report back with the true test for any 3D accelerator: How it affects the game. We base these ratings on graphic enhancements, framerate, and performance to give you a good idea of how a game will perform on your 3D card. And if the game is not accelerated at all, we fill it with a bunch of technobabble you probably won't understand. Either way, you should read it.

(Note: Performance may vary depending on the card and the Setup of your system)

## RATINGS &gt;&gt;

Our rating scale is a simple 1 to 10 — no decimal points, no obscure percentages, just a straight score that gets right to the point. Before we score games, they undergo countless hours of testing on different systems, with different 3D cards — our reviewers even play the games under the influence of various narcotics. In the end we stamp a single score on the game, which is essentially a numeric value of the game's worth. We love games and always try to look on the bright side, but when a pile of steaming crap comes in, we won't hold back and allow our readers to waste their money on said crap. You can count on our reviews for honesty, insight, and maybe even a few laughs.

**GRAPHICS** Rendering quality, FPS, and special effects all contribute to an immersive gaming experience.

**SOUND** Visceral sound effects and appropriate music can help make a good game great.

**DEPTH** How often and how long you find yourself playing a game are good indicators of its quality.

**DESIGN** A great game is one that sucks you in and doesn't let go until it is finished. We call that good design.

**PLUSES**  
+ Here we list various good points about the game in question — in some cases finding three good points is harder than you'd think

**MINUSES**  
- Here is where we point out the game's flaws — after all, even the best games aren't perfect

**RATING 5**

# Planescape: Torment

► ACCELE-RATED

Some shadowing and spell effects look marginally better with a good 3D card instead of software rendering, but it's not much of a difference. BioWare's Infinity engine is really put to good use here.

Skulls and magic and rat-tailed women, oh my!

**W**e game reviewers are just a bit jaded. Like nurses (albeit under different circumstances), we've seen it all. We're not awed by the 15 possible new actions in the latest 3D adventure. Where RTS is con-

cerned, there's nothing new under the *Tiberian Sun*. After the first several hundred games, the avid gamer in us gets gradually nudged into the back of our mental van, while the professional writer takes over the driver's seat.

So when I started up *Planescape: Torment*, a little voice in my mind whispered, "Another RPG based on TSR's factory-produced fantasy system, with *Baldur's Gate*'s engine. Poor dialog, stereotyped characters, endless combat-related quests, lots of treasure and good but non-interactive visuals. Wanna bet?"

But very quickly I was impressed with the game's thoughtfully designed environments, and the

sheer variety of its quests. The combat, graphics, and magic effects are as well-done as *Baldur's Gate*, but the writing is far better than game writing has any right to be.

So the professional took a rest, while the avid gamer took over. Many marathon sessions later, I can affirm that *P:T* is among the most compelling RPGs to appear in years.

The premise is that you're immortal — but amnesiac. Oh, you can swing a sword well enough for a novice and talk to the other inhabitants of Sigil (a sort of medieval fantasy necropolis), but you've forgotten all personal memories. Someone has tattoo'd a message across your back (which you discover upon awakening in a morgue) and suggests you read your journal, but that's gone, too. You're left with only the name of a contact.

Hackneyed as this sounds, *P:T* works some novel twists into the plot as it develops, such as the occasion you witness a memory of a previous incarnation of yourself involved in the emotionless

manipulation of your lover, from her point-of-view. Confused? Well, that's the beauty of unraveling a story that gradually reveals secrets about your own identity. Then, there are the attempts by still another past incarnation to prevent you from learning anything about your former lives — by killing all those innocents who could pass along information.

The characters in your party are better defined and more distinctive than in *Baldur's Gate*. It's not often, even in an RPG, that you tour your surroundings accompanied by a flaming corpse, a ghostly suit of armor, and a floating skull with comic ambitions. Then there's the red-haired, rat-tailed, bodice-straining young thief Annah, who will soon take the place of Lara Croft in every adolescent RPGer's heart.

The characters are thoroughly grounded in the *Planescape* universe (which its creator, Zeb Cook, once described as a "realm occupied by philosophers with clubs"). They don't talk about good or evil as much as they behave according to their highly individualized perceptions, which can lead to violent inter-party conflicts at the most inconvenient times.

Dialog, plot, and character are the real distinctions of *Torment*. In other respects, *BG* looms large. Combat occurs in realtime, while allowing you to pause and issue commands to all members of your party. The graphics, too, are *BG*'s, straight out of the BioWare Infinity

A game with hundreds of spiky, floating, alien language-speakin' freaks, and not a single midget? What's up with that?



Just like our own new guy Matt, all Billy the Iron Golem wanted was to be normal like everyone else.

Holy Mother of Blades! It's ZZZZ-Bing, Demon Lord of Robotic Toasters! Run, run, run for your lives!

Engine, including its excellent spell effects and 2D pre-rendered, largely non-interactive backgrounds, but modified with additional lighting effects and a closer-to-the-ground isometric view.

*BG* was a bruiser game. Its experience-gamering quests were almost always along the lines of "Get me the Great Bronze Toothpick of Hims Bor the Indomitable, and if you have to kill 9,999 goblins along the way, so be it." By contrast, *P: T* administers large dollops of experience when you accomplish a much greater breadth of tasks — trigger a past memory, kill a gang of thugs, or help reunite a pair of writers visiting from another dimension. And on several occasions you can take sides, running errands (for instance) for the frightening hive mentality of a colony of wererats out to destroy an equally frightening bunch of undead, or vice versa.

to criticize. The *Planescape* universe is a non-traditional fantasy setting compared to *BG*'s standard elves and goblins standards, but such is the depth of the story line that it's not at all necessary to be familiar with the table-top setting. And that's a credit to the writers

and designers who've shown that involving tales are still possible in PC games.

**— BARRY BRENESAL** made his first million as the brilliant marketing mind behind *Diana of Ephesus* lingerie

**TORMENTED SOULS**

If the soul is really the essence of life, then a tormented one must be a pretty bad thing. Here we take a look at a few "souls" that have caused undue torment

**SOUL TRAIN**

**WHAT IT IS** → The "urban" version of "American Bandstand"  
**HOW IT TORMENTS US** → We'll never be able to say the words "soul train" without screaming out, "It's Sooooooul Train!"

**SOUL ASYLUM**

**WHAT IT IS** → A Minnesota garage band that made it big with whiny hits like "Runaway Train"  
**HOW IT TORMENTS US** → Lead Singer David Pinner nailed Winona Ryder, and they are now considered "classic" rock. Ugh!

**SOUL MAN**

**WHAT IT IS** → Clean-cut white guy C. Thomas Howell takes tanning pills to turn black and nab a scholarship (and chick)  
**HOW IT TORMENTS US** → C. Thomas Howell. Need we say more?

**SOUL SEARCHING**

**WHAT IT IS** → Looking deep inside oneself to discover crap like meaning and purpose  
**HOW IT TORMENTS US** → Embarking on this journey makes us realize our pathetic lives really have no meaning



Cockroach charm is holy, if you survive the apocalypse.

**GRAPHICS** You might be tempted to call this game "Baldur's Gate Returns." That's not a bad thing.

**SOUND** The music is somewhat repetitive, but the voiceovers are all excellent.

**DEPTH** Hundreds of quests, dozens of hours of gameplay, problems that can be solved by multiple methods.

**DESIGN** Pushes the Infinity engine, with a story that responds to ethical and professional choices.

- PLUSES**
- + Multiple paths to success
  - + Loads of items
  - + Fantastic writing
  - + Hundreds of hours of gameplay

- MINUSES**
- Lengthy visual text
  - Occasional movement problem between maps
  - Not much else

**RATING** 9

www.PC.com Soul Asylum was last seen at E3, playing to a largely underrepresented crowd

# METAL-MASHING COMBOTS TAKE TACTICAL BATTLE TO ENTIRELY NEW LEVELS.



ORBIT



SURFACE



UNDERGROUND



### RIMTECH

Efficient and balanced, Rimtech's arsenal is a mix of kinetic and energy-based weapons. Katana swords and EMP torsos are just a sample of their repertoire.



### MILAGRO

The Mil-Agro CorporoNation wields its way with might and metal. The most primitive, they feature metal shredding tools like gigantic battle axes and Howitzer-equipped torsos.



### NEUROFA

Neurofa's religious fanaticism drives them to acquire the alien Hedotho technology. The rotating electroblade arm and cammo torso are some of their divine inspirations.

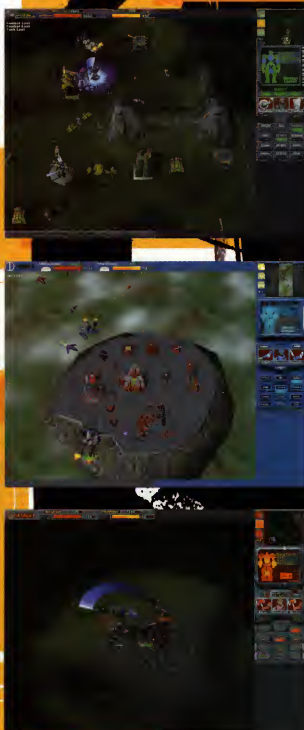
### 3-TIERED GAME PLAY, 3 TIMES THE STRATEGY, AND COMBOTS OVER 3 STORIES HIGH

Metal Fatigue lets you build and command behemoth combots. Armed with parts like sonar legs, jet pack torsos and Gatling gun arms, you can fight for upgrades or simply sever your enemies limbs and attach them to your own forces. Best of all, you control units across 3 levels simultaneously in what has been described as part real-time strategy, part 3D action, and all together revolutionary.



WWW.METALFATIGUE.COM

Go to <http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411>: Product Number 39



# Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation

## ▶ ACCELE-RATED

With Glide and D3D support *TR: TLR* manages to look slightly better than the original *TR*. Skinning, bump-mapping, and lighting tricks are exactly that — tricks. No matter what card you use, graphics are mediocre.

The "Truth in Sequeling Act" would require Eidos to call this game *Tomb Raider 1.6*

**T**he art of the sequel is a tricky business rarely done right. If a game (or movie) sells well (and sometimes even if it doesn't) a sequel will be made. In all my (far too many to admit) years in the game industry, I've seen few good examples and hundreds of bad ones. For the best example of sequels done right you need look no further than *Shigeru Miyamoto*. The creator of *Mario* and *Zelda* always produces a sequel that is visually superior, but more importantly, offers a completely new gaming experience. Far too often sequels are not worthy of a full number upgrade, and the *Tomb Raider* series is the worst offender.

For *Tomb Raider II*, Core and Eidos delivered exactly what I

wanted — more *Tomb Raider*. The game concept was still fresh, the engine was up to par, and we all wanted more Lara. Even the incredibly stupid enemies didn't really bother me. But by the time *Tomb Raider III* came out expectations were higher. Sadly, once again, it was more of the same. Rather than making massive changes, Core and Eidos added bullet points on the feature list, slapped a new number on, threw a party, and watched their cash cow deliver. And just like Groundhog Day, so the same thing has happened with *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*.

For all of the attempts and promises to revolutionize and revitalize the *Tomb Raider* series, in the end *TR: TLR* delivers nothing more than repetition. There are new moves, new puzzles, and even a new level progression, but in each case the only feature they add is new frustration. Lara can now climb poles, swing on ropes, read hieroglyphs, hics, and combine items in her inventory. But instead

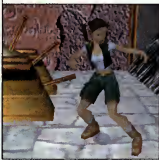


Cutscenes are excellent. It's that crap in between that sucks.

of reworking the engine and, vitally, the play mechanics to incorporate these good ideas, Core has merely slapped them on top of the generic *Tomb Raider* experience. Rope-swinging should be a brilliant new way to get around levels. Instead the ropes are placed where

a column would have been in the earlier games. And don't even get me started on the idiotic controls for rope swinging. After about three failed rope swings in the training level you'll wish there was a code to turn those damn things into the columns they once were.

The much-hyped new inventory system is an improvement from earlier games, although the combining feature is purely cosmetic. Now, instead of finding one key to open a door, Lara has to find two pieces, which she then combines to make into one key. The new gunsight allows you to go into first-person and blast off the heads from enemies, but is only used on limited occasions, and honestly,



The jeep chase scene in *TR: TLR* is a cool mini-game. Unfortunately it goes on waaaay too long.





The new Lara model is "dead sexy," but the backgrounds show little improvement.

that's a shame because those gun-fights are the best battle scenes ever seen in *TR* (not saying much).

The single biggest improvement in *TR:TLR* is in the story and cutscenes. For the first time since *TR I*, there is a story with twists, finely rendered cutscenes, quality voice acting, and an evolving story that you can actually understand. In fact, the best part of this game is when you're watching, not playing.

Perhaps Core realized that the only place you can really raid tombs is Egypt and they set the game entirely in that environment. While it's the perfect place for Lara's adventures, I have a feeling the real reason for the return was because the square-edged architecture in Egypt can be convincingly recreated in the out-of-date engine.

I'd love to say that *TR:TLR* is total crap, but I'd be lying. The



adventure, storytelling, and action combination are still a tight package and people who have never played *TR* will love this game. However, for those of us who have been with Lara since the beginning, there just isn't anything here of interest. At best, *TR:TLR* brings back memories of how much fun the first game was and at worst, it reminds you why you didn't care about finishing the second two.

One final plea: Please fix this game! We still want Lara, just not



in the same game we've been playing for four years. Despite what the title might indicate, we are certain there will be another game next year. There are three things you can count on in this life: Death, taxes, and *Tomb Raider*. *TR* is the lesser of these evils. Barely.

— MIKE SALMON *truly wanted to enjoy this game*

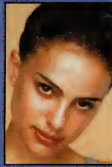


## CRADLE RAIDER

The training levels where you get to play a young Lara Croft as she is put through her spelunking paces by Dr. Van Croft are a bit disturbing (especially considering a Core executive was charged with trying to procure sex with a nine-year old girl). Can a movie and a controversial movie be far behind?

**STARRING**  
Jeremy Irons as Dr. Van Croft  
Katalie Portman as Lolita Croft

**OPENING LINE:** "Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul. Lo-lee-ta: the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps down the palate to tap, at three, on the teeth. Lo. Lee. Ta. She was Lo, plain Lo, in the morning, standing four feet ten in one boot. She was Lola in khakis. She was Dolly at school. She was Dolores on the dotted line. But in my arms she was always Lolita."



**GRAPHICS** Same blocky backgrounds, but the special effects and better polygonal models almost cover it up.

**SOUND** Pretty standard sound effects and music. It was cool in *TR I*, now it is just real old.

**DEPTH** There is no shortage of frustrating puzzles and adventure but revisiting the same areas is annoying.

**DESIGN** A solid game, but purely cosmetic changes mean it's the same game as earlier ones.

### + PLUSES

- + Lara wears a thong
- + Better puzzles than *TR III*
- + Binoculars are pretty cool
- + Feature film-quality cutscenes

### — MINUSES

- Frustration around every corner
- More of the same *TR*
- Playing young Lara Croft makes you feel "dirty"

**RATING 5**

# MESSIAH { EXORCISE YOUR RIGHT OF POSSESSION

## PROBLEM:



How does a pudgy Messiah with only a diaper for defense find out the source of evil on earth?



## SOLUTION:

Possession... Naked and defenseless, Bob uses his only weapon and takes possession of the first character he sees, a worker.



Bob, recognizable by the halo, realizes that the worker does not have security access to leave the room. So to cause a commotion, "Bob" lowers a 5-ton tank on unsuspecting worker.



Then he can possess the medic sent in to aid the crushed worker, medics have security access.



Now through a warehouse door, Bob still needs access to the lab where he believes he'll find some answers.



Dumping the medics body, Bob realizes that Cops have access to the lab.



Cops also have laser sighted GUNS! How heavenly!



While being scanned at the door Bob attracts some unwanted attention.



After seeing the awesome power displayed by the behemoth, who needs a cop. Bob takes possession of the Behemoth and is ready to KICK SOME ASS!

The huge 15 foot genetically engineered Behemoth rips the cop's heart out and like a rag doll tosses his lifeless body across the room.





<b>PUBLISHER</b> → Eidos	<b>DEVELOPER</b> → Mucky Foot
<b>REQUIRED</b> → PII 366, 32MB RAM, 500MB hard drive, 8X CD-ROM, 4MB graphics card	<b>IDEAL</b> → PII 400, 64MB RAM, 200MB hard drive, D3D accelerator

**ACCELE-RATED**

In software mode there's a real old-school pixelated look, but it's still playable. The environments and characters look cleaner on the TNTz and G4oo over the Voodoo3, the performance was comparable.

# Urban Chaos

## Who you callin' Tomb Raider?

**G**uess the game: Third-person action/adventure, female lead character, published by Eidos? Would you believe it's not *Tomb Raider: The Expansion*. Just in time to miss the nominal turn of the century, enter *Urban Chaos*, set in the "strange days" following New Year's Eve, 1999. Union City, USA — its streets littered with the windswept detritus of the previous night's revels — has fallen into the clutches of the Wildcats. Taking the role initially of tough-bitch rookie cop D'arci Stern, it's your job to roam the streets and keep U.C.'s shit under control.

*Urban Chaos* is a heartening mix of game types — action, adventure, old-school side-brawler, RPG — all wrapped up in a beautiful, free-

roaming 3D cityscape full of ambient life. U.C.'s sidewalks are awash with citizens and scumbags alike. Gawkers make curbside wise-cracks as they watch a ledge-perched suicide-to-be, thugs harass civilians and challenge metropolitan ahhthoritaay — and you walk freely amongst it all, the leggy Dark Knight of your own personal little Gotham.

And like Bruce Wayne, you'll need to go through some training. The tutorials are painless and give a good sense of what's ahead, from multiple attackers in melee combat to stealing, driving, and abusing vehicles (though car control is a little weird).

The *Urban Chaos* engine is a joy to experience, particularly if you're tired of dull-ass game worlds that



A newly in-shape Ed Lee returns to PCXL to get his revenge.

feel like, ahem, tombs. You can take on multiple sub-missions, but ancillary felons, kick cans to give away your position, commandeer vehicles, run down suspects, talk down suicides, cuff and arrest perpetrators ... and oh brother, can you fight. *Urban Chaos*' follow-cam scheme seamlessly switches to a kind of hopped-up side-scroller brawling mode whenever D'arci faces one or more attackers, and supports its own arcade-worthy brand of punch/kick combos. She

could shoot the perps, provided she has a gun. So if D'arci is a cop, why does she start off unarmed?

Later in the game, Roper, a gravelly voiced ex-military dude appears with an enforcement style more focused on meaty gunfights. By the time Roper appears, the difficulty of some levels makes the lack of any mid-level save point infuriating. One blown jump or missed shot and you have the restart the whole mission.

Still, the brilliant little touches of *Urban Chaos* — the real world/realtme feel, populated streets, and stand-up combat system, go a long way toward making you feel part of a live, breathing world. It wouldn't take much more attention to environmental logic to make an *Urban Chaos* sequel a ten-out-of-ten title. Here's hoping for lots of talented copycats.

— CHRIS HUDAK still respected D'arci Stern in the morning (but the Roper "thing" was o mistake)



The only thing missing from this littered scene is the crying Indian dude.



The worst sports riot ever was at the Hong Kong Jockey Club in 1918, where 604 people were killed

**GRAPHICS** Quite good — very detailed, moody, and teeming with ambient life. A beautiful 3D delight.

**SOUND** Killer urban soundscape, especially during back-alley hand-to-hand; fitting cheesy dialogue.

**DEPTH** Near-perfect balance of action/adventure and just-this-side-of-brain-dead arcade fighting/driving.

**DESIGN** Varied enough for curious types, while allowing the more impatient gamer to hand out beatdowns.

**PLUSES**

- + Pleasing all-in-one running/fighting/driving game engine
- + Ambient, living city environs
- + Mostly great audio

**MINUSES**

- Some gaps in mission logic
- Iffy car control
- Single-player only

**RATING** 8

# Wild Wild West: The Steel Assassin

ACCELE-RATED

Surprisingly lackluster graphics, given the heavy duty requirements. And the Will Smith character just ain't jiggly enough. In fact, we'd say he is surprisingly jigglyless. You could even call him jig-free.

You've experienced the Willennium, now experience the Swillennium

**S**omebody or some group has been killing heads-of-state in Europe. Now they've sent a threatening letter to President Grant, claiming to be the murderers of Lincoln. You control Jim West and Artemus Gordon, two Secret Service agents dispatched by Grant to get to the bottom of the matter. You do this with a flamboyance and disregard for logic which were the hallmarks of the vintage TV series, "Wild, Wild West," a sort of 19th century "Batman."

*WWW* offers not one, but two game types in a single package: Action-based tasks (with West) and graphical adventure puzzles, courtesy of Gordon (he was the one who wore those terrible disguises which somehow fooled everybody in the old TV series). Of course, not everybody possesses both the patience for puzzles and the hair-trigger responses for realtime

action; so *WWW* lets you adjust the difficulty level for each game type separately. It's a nice touch.

Too bad there aren't similar touches throughout the game. West's sword-fighting presents a change of pace, but his frequent gun battles lack any strategy whatsoever, since he can't move while shooting. You're reduced to a hit-the-targets arcade.

The Gordon puzzle games are even worse. They're often based on repetitive motion rather than logic or intuition, and the rewards for success aren't worth it — who wants to finish a 10-step puzzle that ends with nothing more than lighting an ordinary lantern? Then there were those times when I had to figure out how to dodge Gordon out of areas packed with villainous henchmen. (He works for the mid-19th century equivalent of the Secret Service, and yet he refuses to pack a weapon. What's wrong



You stand, you aim, you fire — and not a whole lot else.

with this picture?) It's a case of guessing where to move Gordon, failing, dying, reloading the game, guessing another direction, moving a few steps to one side, guessing again, dying, etc. If this is what reincarnation is like, I'll take a seat in hell instead, right between Ghandi and George Burns. (You saw the *South Park* movie, right? Sure, right after returning *WWW* and demanding your money back.)

While the background graphics are reasonably competent 2D artwork, *WWW*'s 3D figures are subpar. They move like arthritic mannequins and the vocal acting ranges from reasonably competent to embarrassingly hammy. As for the dialog, it's lengthy and dull, but



occasionally reaches the heights of howling bad writing that works well with friends and popcorn.

*WWW* does have the distinction of being considerably better than the overhyped knock-off film of the TV series. However, that's not saying much, and this combination action/puzzler just doesn't jell.

— BARRY BRENESAL wants to be reincarnated as Will Smith



Charlton Heston, eat your heart out!

**GRAPHICS** Reasonably good 2D backdrops; bad 3D models. Mediocre graphics for a mediocre game.

**SOUND** Voice acting is variable — crap lines can be fun when delivered with hammy incompetence.

**DEPTH** Not much. It's completely linear, playing the same way down to all details.

**DESIGN** Oh, a few good ideas, all poorly implemented in a rush job to capitalize on the movie publicity.

## PLUSES

- + Mixes action with puzzles
- + Attractive 2D backgrounds
- + Uh, a sorta popular franchise

## MINUSES

- Bad 3D modeling
- Bad voiceovers
- Lots of extensive cutscenes
- Gameplay obstructs the plot

RATING 4

<b>PUBLISHER</b> → Acclaim	<b>DEVELOPER</b> → Criterion Studios
<b>REQUIRED</b> → P3 33, 32MB RAM, 190MB hd, 4X CD-ROM, DirectX 6, Woodoo 1	<b>IDEAL</b> → PII 450, 128MB RAM, 12GB hd, 24X CD-ROM, TNT2

**▶ ACCELE-RATED**  
 The tricked-out flashy graphics of *Trickstyle* really take advantage of your 3D card. TNT2 is your best option, but the game ran extremely well on all 3D boards we tested. Happy? You should be.

# Trickstyle

*Quake III Arena* on hoverboards ... minus the blood and stuff

**S**nowboarding, skateboarding, boogie boarding, and wakeboarding simply aren't enough. We must have more board sports. There's not much left to do though but the *Back to the Future 2* hover board thang. Hey wait, rocket boards might be kinda cool. Pulling a 1080° Method a hundred feet out sounds good to me.

*Trickstyle* is set up like every other racing game: Complete and win a series of tracks to unlock

another series and repeat. It looks like *Quake III Arena* with all the weapons replaced with high speed hoverboards. There are nine riders and four different boards available. Some riders are better racers, others better stunters, and some are just brute force bullies.

Gameplay is divided between completing challenges in the Velodrome and racing your ass off in any of the 18 tracks. The challenges are basically well orchestrated training exercises designed to teach the various moves and tricks used throughout the game. Unfortunately most of them force you to jump through hoops in order to win, and I hate doing that. The race oriented tracks are set in the UK, Japan and the good ol' U.S. Each location has five courses and a "Boss" stage at the end that requires you to jump through really difficult hoops.

Considering the word "trick" in the title, I was a bit disappointed



The now required out-of-proportion female racer.



This is one of the prettiest racing games around.

that the "trick" aspect didn't play a bigger part in the game. Almost all of the 360s and double-flips are done during the Velodrome challenges and few get used in the races. The AI competition is just so damn good that if you eat it on one or two gnar-gnar tricks, you might as well write off the race, because catching up is nearly impossible.

Where the game does excel is in the visuals department. Both the tracks and the Velodrome are filled with beautiful textures and detailed architecture. Board effects range from streaking vapor trails to explosive energy bursts, and with up to eight other racers on the track at a time, your eyes will scream for mercy.

All is not perfect in Trickstyleville, however. The level of dif-



ficulty is unreal and narrow tracks can be more than frustrating at times. Also, some other modes of play would have helped considerably — maybe a game of "tag" or even a "capture the flag" variant.

So if you're looking for the next big thing in tricky board sports, keep looking, but if you want a racing game with a ton of style give this one a try. Otherwise kneel down and pray for a Skysurfing game that lets you pull 1080,000° Stalefishes while racing to the ground at 60 feet per second.

— ERIC SMITH is probably snowboarding as you read this

When we heard the name *Trickstyle* we thought this was a lady of the evening simulator — honest!

<b>GRAPHICS</b>	Hella good looking tracks, environments, and character models. It's all about the board effects.	<b>+ PLUSES</b>	+ It's a real fun board sport
<b>SOUND</b>	If you like V.G.T. (Video Game Techno) you'll love it, otherwise kill the music and supply your own.		+ Vapor trails, baby!
<b>DEPTH</b>	I wish there had been more than straight-out racing and forced jumping through hoops.	+ Airs so big your ears will pop	+ Trick effects look great
<b>DESIGN</b>	Wait. Wasn't this game called <i>Trickstyle</i> ? Shoulda been titled <i>Hoverboard Super Extreme Racer</i> .	<b>- MINUSES</b>	- Too much race, not enough tricks
			- Difficulty level too high
			- Jumping through hoops sucks
			- Trick controls are a bit complex
		<b>RATING</b>	<b>7</b>



PUBLISHER → Infogrames  
REQUIRED → P33, 32MB RAM, 250MB hard  
drive, Direct 3D card with 4MB, 4X CD-ROM

DEVELOPER → Pitbull Syndicate, Ltd.  
IDEAL → PII 300, 64MB RAM, Voodoo2 or  
higher card

# Test Drive 6

ACCELE-RATED

Test Drive 6 exhibits flat graphics and simply detailed environments and cars — not nearly as sharp as other new racers, regardless of your 3D accelerator of choice. So take your pick, it really won't matter.

You can't keep a mediocre thing down (no matter how hard you try)

Way back in the day, there was the Commodore 64. All sorts of greatness was crammed in to its 64K of memory, and game developers had to rely on programming prowess to catch our eye. Back then, we didn't have no stinkin' 3D cards to make worlds all pretty. And, come to think of it, there were a lot of ugly games. *Test Drive*, however, was not one of them. It was the end-all, be-all of home racing games.

A lot has changed since then. A lot has taken up the dormant *Test Drive* mantle on the now-defunct 3DO system, and has since evolved into the greatest line of arcade PC racers. The *Test Drive* series, however, has tragically evolved into a sort of ugly younger sibling trying to keep up with his cool older brother by pitifully copying everything he does. *Test Drive*



Follow the gray brick road, follow the gray brick road.

6 is the latest in the series to trail behind, a tiny speck in the rear view mirror of *NFS*. *TD5* was the same, and it's only those damned PlayStation owners who buy the series that keep this dying franchise's pulse alive on the PC.

*TD6* has many of the options of the last two *NFS* games such as the Cops and Speeders chase modes, and the "car wagging" system. It's also introduced a keen auto paint option. It's got a ton of cool cars,

from Jaguars and Audis to old muscle cars, and above all, the soundtrack kicks ass.

Control is passable at best, but not nearly as refined as a certain other game we've mentioned too many times



I love muscle cars in Rome in the springtime.

already, and the tracks run the usual gamut of urban and rural settings around the globe. The tracks are at least well designed, especially in the way they are full of little branches and short cuts.

Cool soundtrack aside, the rest of the presentation of the game feels flat, behind the times, and unrefined. Sadly, *TD6* doesn't come close to being as good as *NFS3*, let alone the fourth iteration. It doesn't even make up its *NFS* shortcomings by excelling with a good multiplayer option. There isn't one.

Unfortunately, there's nothing to drive this cookie-cutter sequel to anything above mediocre.

— JASON D'APRILE enjoys pain, but enough is enough!

BEAT A DEAD HORSE

The *Test Drive* series continues to sell brilliantly despite the poor quality of games. This has inspired publisher Infogrames to further expand the successful *Test Drive* franchise. Here are a couple of their forthcoming titles that take this series even further still. Consider yourself warned...

OFFSPRING

WHAT IT IS → *Test Drive: Offspring* — A generic racing game featuring the music of Offspring. Hell, the music is the only reason to buy this *Test Drive* games now anyway.

ROAD HEAD

WHAT IT IS → *Test Drive: Road Head* — A generic driving sim that requires participation from your wife, girlfriend, hooker.



This car looks just like the one Farrah drove in "Charlie's Angels."

**GRAPHICS** Looks like a 3D accelerated port of the Playstation version, and that ain't too good.

**SOUND** Sound effects are tolerable. The soundtrack rocks and is the best part of the game.

**DEPTH** Plenty of modes, and a career mode of sorts gives it more depth than usual for an arcade racer.

**DESIGN** Some decent track design, and the short cuts are great, but overall design is sub-par.

**PLUSES**  
+ The soundtrack rocks!  
+ Some hot, muscular, manly cars  
+ Short cuts on the tracks

**MINUSES**  
- Mediocre controls  
- Mediocre graphics  
- They don't just clone sheep now, do they?

**RATING** 3

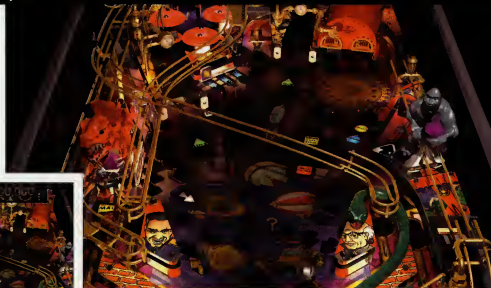
# Pro Pinball Fantastic Journey

I'd like to see Tommy try his mad skillz at this

**B**lack moments like Interplay's abominable *Star Trek Pinball* really put a dent in the credibility of the PC pinball game. But Empire's *Pro Pinball* series has always carried the torch of pinball fanatics and it continues to do so in this fourth iteration.

Would you believe that *Fantastic Journey* even has a story? Drawing influence (read: copying) the tales of Jules Verne's *Nautilus*, it's you against a supervillain (General Yagov) who's threatened to destroy the moon, because he had an unhappy childhood. But ... da na na na ... there is hope for mankind in the shape of Professor Steam (no kidding).

The Professor has built four steam-powered "contraptions" that appear from within the table, leaving you to guide them through more difficult adventures by hitting various sequences of ramps and orbits. The purpose is to get four crystals that will allow you to fight the ultimate battle with the General. This adventure portion is pre-



The game can stutter and the balls blur at the highest settings.



sented on the dot matrix screen above the table.

Side "quests" supply the opportunity to unlock multiball mayhem that can, though I can't figure out how, result in ten balls in play.

Given the staggering detail (supporting resolutions up to 1600x1200 with 16 million colors), the table looks fantastic. It's bright and colorful at this resolution but requires a monster machine/ video card/RAM combo in order to avoid slow down,

especially in multiball — and jerkiness makes pinball games crap. Still, even at 800x600 it looks great.

The real show-stopper, however, is the physics engine. No other pinball game comes close to matching the hyper-realistic sights, sounds, and effects. On the down side is the music. Attempting to capture the campy Jules Verne style, it instead sounds like it was pulled straight from one of those movies that wants to be "serious adult entertainment" and not the serious soft porn it so obviously is. Sorry guys, but this is porn music (from what I understand that to be, having never heard any myself).

Of course, you have to be into pinball simulations to get anything from this, since there is just the one table. Reading the manual to find out how to access all the game

options is vital, though the customizability of the series continues to expand as you can tweak absolutely every function and track every ball drop through the detailed status screens. Then, a world wide scoring championship goes on through the *Pro Pinball* web site, where real World Champion pinball players have been known to post their scores.

This series could really use a little more spice in the table design, but the physics engine and graphic detail certainly make this the only pinball game to own. Be warned, I was hoping to have this review finished by midnight. It's now after 4:00 A.M. *Pro Pinball* is sleep deprivation in game format.

— ROB SMITH was the coptain of his college pinball squad



The steam drill adventure is underway (the others are airship, submarine, and boat).

**GRAPHICS** Incredible detail at all resolutions, down to individual wires should you care to take the table tour.

**SOUND** Perfect bumper and ball rolling effects, but terrible background muzak.

**DEPTH** One table isn't much, but it packs more gameplay in to that one than most "real" pinball games.

**DESIGN** A great table, but some of the ideas are showing their age. More originality for the next one, please.

## PLUSES

- The best pinball engine bar none
- Incredible table detail
- Infuriatingly addictive

## MINUSES

- Supermarket muzak
- Few pinball design innovations
- High system specs required for perfect performance

RATING **8**



# WE UNDERSTAND...



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ConsumerREVIEW.com Sites

PUBLISHER → Activision  
 REQUIRED → P200, 64MB RAM, 500MB hard  
 drive, 4X CD-ROM, 3D accelerator card

DEVELOPER → Pandemic  
 IDEAL → Pent 450, 128MB RAM, 16-MB AGP  
 3D accelerator card

▶ ACCELE-RATED

A ton of visual options means *Battlezone 2* can be tweaked for a wide range of systems, yet looks awesome no matter what you use. While there are disappointing elements here, the graphics aren't one of them.

# Battlezone 2

Battlezone — the fight between bugs and a publisher's release schedule

**W**hen Activision released their new version of the classic *Battlezone*, a lot of folks were perplexed. Those who remembered the line-drawn 3D shooter from the early '80s saw few similarities between the two games (because there weren't any). While it might have been misnamed, *Battlezone* was easily one of the best games of the year. It took the burgeoning first-person shooter/RTS hybrid genre into the realm of the sublime with a damn near perfect interface, great plot, and incredible graphics.

It then proceeded to sell like proverbial poop. I blame you, all of you, for not buying it, despite our recommendations. Undeterred (and assuming the game buyer can't be that dumb second time around), Activision and their offshoot group, Pandemic, invested in the sequel. *Battlezone 2* is at once everything we loved about the original, and hate most about new games released to market today. It uses the same fantastic, elegant, easy to handle interface for control, has stunning graphics, and seamlessly combines first-person shooting with realtime strategy. But there's one slight problem — it's not finished yet.



Hmm, it's one of those damn unknown alien structures again. Hell, just blow it up.

Beautiful sky and weather effects, and sharp, smooth textures, make the game worlds of Pluto, jungle, ice, and lava planets look fantastic and they all have contoured landscapes with plenty of elevation changes and variation.

The units look terrific too, and the mix of alien and human tanks, construction vehicles, buildings, turrets, and other craft is diverse — exactly what you would expect from a good RTS game.

Special effects accompany weapons fire and buildings, and are all brimming with detail and reflections, giving *Battlezone 2* a real spark in the visuals department.

Audio is equally as impressive. The sound effects pump and the music is very well composed. Hell, even the voice acting is excellent.

The story itself, however, is an exercise in cliché, but its execution through mission briefings, in-mission cinematics, and radio chatter makes it seem interesting just the same. Another immersive new element is the inclusion of indigenous life forms on some of the planets you visit. There are bipedal lizards in the jungle world that enjoy eating ejected pilots, and large rhino beasts on the ice planet that like to bite anything.

Like the original game, the interface with mouse and keyboard is

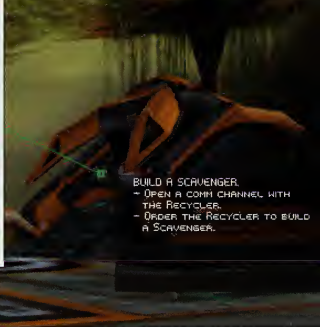


(Right) The first step in an alien base, this hive mind craft is your foundation for destruction.





These constructor bots are fun to look up at and shoot. Oh yeah, they build stuff, too.



**BUILD A SCAVENGER.**  
 - OPEN A COMM CHANNEL WITH THE RECYCLER.  
 - ORDER THE RECYCLER TO BUILD A SCAVENGER.

**FAMOUS CELEBRITY BATTLES**

Thanks to fine publications such as *People* and *National Enquirer* w, have been able to see celebrities at their worst. And since we have absolutely no knowledge of anything before TV, these are the only battles we can actually remember



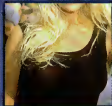
**OPRAH WINFREY'S BATTLE WITH WEIGHT**

**THE STORY SO FAR** → The millionaire talk show host's weight can shift from 95-400 lbs, depending on the time of day and Hershey's stock price  
**WHO'LL WIN** → There is no amount of fat-assedness that cannot be removed by being excessively wealthy



**LINDA TRIPP'S BATTLE WITH UGLY**

**THE STORY SO FAR** → The mainish snitch has endured countless vicious statements about her hideous appearance. Finally she popped for some long overdue surgery  
**WHO'LL WIN** → Unless there are some serious advances in plastic surgery, Linda's trip down surgery lane will just make her a different kind of ugly — but still ugly nonetheless



**PAMELA ANDERSON'S BATTLE WITH THE BULGE**

**THE STORY SO FAR** → The plastic pin-up got enormous t-a-s-s so she could be a huge star. Then, at the peak of her popularity, she had them downsized so people could see her for who she "really is"  
**WHO'LL WIN** → Eventually Pam will realize what everyone else already knows: She's completely talentless. She will then finally embrace and appreciate her best trait — her enormous t-a-s-s

nothing short of perfectly intuitive. All the unit command and building functions are within easy reach of your normal movement keys, and controlling your character requires the same control configuration that most gamers use in numerous first-person shooters.

The problems with *Battlezone 2*, however, really hurt what could have otherwise been a fantastic game. First of all, the missions are chronically linear, and it's possible to make one unbeatable simply by trying a different tactic than the ones the designers intended. Base-building is too often put on the back burner for the sake of tightly scripted, story-driven objectives, so for a pure realistic action/strategy experience you have to go either to the instant action setting or multiplayer.

Unfortunately, there aren't enough maps to support the instant action option, and Internet play is plain broken and awaiting a patch. The multiplayer side has some great team game options, though, and much like the original,

*Battlezone*'s unparalleled mix of explosive action and strategy makes it one of the most involving multiplayer games around.

But, alas, the problems don't stop — engine failures let you cliph through buildings and landscape. AI limitations abound too. Enemies don't notice you're there until you're within a certain range — even if you're firing at them. Pathfinding is problematic, and your troops can take interminable amounts of time trying to negotiate the landscape when following you. Unless given the attack command, your forces won't always enter battle as quickly as they should, and when they do, their tactics are crap.

For all the many problems in the game, *Battlezone 2* is still an entertaining, distinctive piece of work, but it was clearly rushed to shelves, forcing gamers to rely once again on the promise of a patch to make the game that it should already be.

— JASON D'APRILE *has some pretty crappy tactics too*



THE BIBLE IS BEING WRITTEN. UN, WHO'S EXPLAINED THE BIBLE TO THE OTHER PLANETS.

There's so much blue, I just can't take it anymore!

<b>GRAPHICS</b>	A beautiful game of varying landscapes, lovely eye candy, visceral action, and excellent units.
<b>SOUND</b>	Great sound effects, impressive voice acting, and a really fine soundtrack. Bravo!
<b>DEPTH</b>	First-rate action and realtime strategy converge for some of the most distinctive gaming around.
<b>DESIGN</b>	Single-player levels are too linear, but still generally involving, and the control is superbly designed.

<b>PLUSES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Fantastic graphics and sound</li> <li>+ Near-perfect control and a great physics feel</li> <li>+ The best action-strategy hybrid</li> </ul>
<b>MINUSES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Released way too soon and buggy as hell</li> <li>- Clichéd story line</li> <li>- Mission design is too linear</li> </ul>
<b>RATING</b>	<b>7</b>

... now she looks like Michael Caine in a Monica Lewinsky wig — not much improvement

Respect for life is  
a mortal concern.



FORGOTTEN REALMS

# Baldur's Gate™ II Shadows of Amn™

Can you forget what it is to be human? This is one of the questions you'll confront in Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn. This epic sequel to the Role Playing Game of the Year will immerse you in a world of intrigue, adventure and fierce combat. Set in the Forgotten Realms™ campaign setting, Baldur's Gate II is the most stunning Advanced Dungeons and Dragons® game to date.

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<b>PUBLISHER</b> → Monolith	<b>DEVELOPER</b> → Metropolis Studios
<b>Ideal</b> → P200, 32MB RAM, 250MB hard drive, 2MB RAM video card	<b>Ideal</b> → Pentium 450, 64MB RAM, 4MB 3D accelerator card

**▶ ACCELE-RATED**  
 The combat animations of *Odium* benefit nicely from a 3D card. However, the software rendering mode is good, and third-person, isometric RPGs aren't made for speed and pizzazz.

# Odium

It's Poland — with Mutants

**O**riginality evidently wasn't listed as a priority when asserting the creative writing direction of *Odium*. What we get here is an RPG with a stereotypical government-sponsored-genetic-experiments-run-amok plot. (We sure saved a lot of tedious narrative by phrasing it like that.) You control a party of three (to start) NATO veteran mercs as they explore a necropolis, and battle dozens of mutants that look like a bizarre

cross between a giant insect, MechWarrior, and any Canadian hockey player you care to name.

Your route through this world is fairly linear, claims to the contrary notwithstanding. Travel is through narrow corridors, and movement is limited by a series of obstacles until you get items permitting passage — a key to a locked door, a plank of wood for a broken road, yadda yadda. There are no branching dialogs and all battles and treasure are preconfigured, which really limits the replay value.

The turn-based combat system is intriguing, however. Instead of utilizing a single point allotment for combined movement and attack (so that the farther you move, the less points you can spend on attacking), each character has separate movement and attack points. This lets you move before and after said attack, allowing for plenty of scope for planning coordinated assaults. There are both base statistics that



If the dialog was any hokier, it would have to be on television.

increase when your people gain levels, as well as weapons statistics that rise with use.

While the isometric main screen is dark, 2D, and mostly non-interactive, combat graphics are better. The animations are detailed and realistic — though the developers forgot to take into account secondary light sources. (If you set fire to an opponent they burn for several rounds, but don't cast shadows.)

*Odium* really has problems, however, in the roleplaying department. Whoever heard of elite mercs who "miss," using rifles (with an accuracy rating in excess of 85%) when standing directly next to their targets? And shouldn't they have started with a few experience levels and fancier equipment, given that a previous NATO team went missing in the area?

My biggest gripe, though, is in regards to *Odium's* voiceovers. To put it bluntly, they give credence to my belief that any programmer who steps within 20 feet of a recording studio should be pan-fried, while the acting is about as good as diner theater in Mississippi. The written dialog is on par with the acting, the characters coming across like a bunch of socially-challenged 5-year-olds.

Still, game balance is good! Overall, if you can stomach the cheesy script and acting, *Odium* is a reasonably fun RPG — but don't say it in the same breath as *Plonescope: Torment*, *Fallout*, or even *Ultimo Ascension*, please.

— BARRY BRENESAL is a powerful evil force from another dimension



Our specialty tonight is a flaming Garcia.



<b>GRAPHICS</b>	Too cluttered on the main screen but the combat animations are great.	<b>PLUSES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Good combat system</li> <li>+ Attractive combat animations</li> <li>+ Varied weapons and armor</li> </ul>
<b>SOUND</b>	Only mildly annoying "atmospheric" music, but the voiceovers are terrible.	<b>MINUSES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Terrible writing, lousy voiceovers</li> <li>- Linear gameplay</li> <li>- When a party member dies, the game ends</li> </ul>
<b>DEPTH</b>	Linear and superficial. Few stats, and only combat skills. Party members are nearly identical.	<b>RATING</b>	
<b>DESIGN</b>	A good combat system and decent graphics married to bad writing and an unimaginative game.		

PUBLISHER → Activision  
REQUIRED → Pro, 32MB RAM, 345MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM, 4MB video card

DEVELOPER → Presto Studios  
IDEAL → PII 166, 64MB RAM, 685MB hard drive, TNT or Voodoo card

# Star Trek: Hidden Evil

## ACCELE-RATED

A 3D card makes the graphics in *Star Trek: Hidden Evil* a bit smoother but the pre-rendered backgrounds look just as good in software mode. The scenes on Ba'ku are really nice looking.

### To boldly go where nobody really cares

Once again it is my sad duty to bring the post-mortem results of a *Star Trek* game to the reviewing slab. I'm not a superstitious guy, but I am a *Trek* enthusiast in my way, and I can't help but feel that by merely being the messenger of these botched *Trek*-chiotomies, that the Great Bird of the Galaxy is gonna take a big ol' cosmic dump on my head one of these days. Oh Bird, if you're out there, please remember it's not my fault — it's Presto's.

What we have here is a kind of Romulan Ale lite version of an adventure game — tastes okay, and a lot less filling. Presto has created a cinematic adventure designed to draw in casual gamers without intimidating them with overwhelming worlds, baffling stories and complicated interfaces — and succeeded all too well. *Hidden Evil* takes place months after the events in the film *Insurrection*, and tells the tale of Sovok, a Starfleet ensign studying the Vulcan Way, assigned to serve under Captain Picard. The Feds are conducting an excavation of alien relics on the planet Ba'ku (from the movie), and the Romulians have come to screw things up.

Seasoned gamers have seen the interface style before — the pretty, cinematic *Resident Evil*-like rendered background approach makes for great-looking scenes on Ba'ku, a Romulan space installation, and the Enterprise herself. The expected tools are here — the phaser shoots things, the communicator communicates (Data and Picard are on the other end, keeping you mindful of your objectives),



"Ensign, whatever you're doing back there ... don't stop."

Friends don't let friends mix inferior combat schemes.

and the hand pinches (why fire a shot and raise the alarm when quiet Vulcanization will do the trick?). The Tricorder actually serves a game purpose, elegantly giving you the onscreen lowdown on the name, composition, and function of nearby objects. The problems begin with the use of these tools, as the control scheme is awkward and, insult to injury, non-configurable.

To its credit, *Hidden Evil* breaks *Trek* tradition and lets you pull the phaser early and often. Alas, the phaser has sorta-but-not-really auto-targeting which, when combined with the delay between trigger-press and actual gunfire, makes for frustrating combat in the middle-to-late stages of the game. Gameplay progress is broken up into modular missions, wherein

you're baby-fed what you need to do. I say with no exaggeration that this will be completed in a single day — five hours tops.

And, Data and Picard aren't around nearly as much as game marketing has you believe. Most of the time, your interaction is via communicator, their voices prodding your non-com ass in the right direction. Still, nice voice work.

All the elements for a decent game (save that sticky-trigger phaser) are here, including lots of cutscenes and beautiful looks at the Enterprise interior, but there's nowhere near enough of it. *Hidden Evil* will not intimidate Sunday Trekkers, but it won't challenge devoted Trekkers, either.

— CHRIS HUDAK is still a grimly-determined Trekker

## HIDDEN "EEEEVIL"

Ricky Martin is blatantly evil. John Rocker is quite clearly Beelzebub. But that's apparent at first glance. The lurking, insidious evil is the worst kind, and here we take a look at a couple of surprisingly evil things and how we can exorcise these demons

### VERN TROYER



**THE EXTERIOR OF** → Vern as an adorable little feila. So darn cute you'll want him as a pet  
**BELIES THE PURE EVIL OF** → His miniature Machiavellian plan to rule the world, beginning with taking our full-sized women (see January *Playboy* for proof)  
**HOW TO EXORCISE** → Could try a miniature exorcism set, but it's probably just easier to stuff him in a shoe box in Imelda Marcos' closet

### POKEMON



**THE EXTERIOR OF** → Cute, furry, adorable little things for children to collect  
**BELIES THE PURE EVIL OF** → Full revenge for Hiroshima. We thought the Japanese had forgotten about the big one, but mark our words, these freakish pastel demons will be our undoing  
**HOW TO EXORCISE** → It is too late. Instead we must put the infected children out of their misery

**GRAPHICS** "Resident Trek." It looks good — at a distance — and is appropriate to the subject matter.

**SOUND** Nearly flawless, with sound direct from the films and show. Plus, Patrick Stewart and Brent Spiner.

**DEPTH** None. Again, Trekkers will have to swim into their video collections for any depth in the *Trek* world.

**DESIGN** Accessible to newbies, but this hybrid bastard fails to go "where no one has gone before."

## + PLUSES

- + Patrick Stewart and Brent Spiner
- + Logical depiction of the Tricorder
- + Accessible to all types of gamers

## - MINUSES

- Very short and ends abruptly
- Repetitive, uninspired latter half
- Awkward combat

**RATING**

# How Does a Klingon Feel at the Helm of a Capital Ship?

With more than 2 years of development refinement, *Star Trek: Klingon Academy* provides the most realistic capital ship experience available.

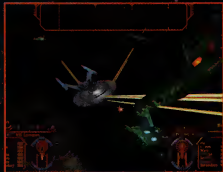
- As a Klingon, expect run-ins with competing races, both traditional and original to *Klingon Academy*. You may even have the pleasure of destroying the *Enterprise* itself.
- Experience the first true use of 3D space terrain providing rich mission variety throughout the single-player campaign.

It's all here. It's all new. It's all *Star Trek*.

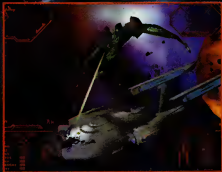
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**PUBLISHER** → Hasbro Interactive  
**REQUIRED** → P166, 32MB RAM, 20MB hard drive, 8X CD-ROM

**DEVELOPER** → Meyer/Glass Interactive  
**IDEAL** → PH 233, 32X CD-ROM, 100MB hard drive

# Diplomacy

The Fine Art of Back-Knifing

**I**ntroduction: I first saw the new patient, *Diplomacy*, in therapy three weeks ago. It had recently moved to the PC inner beltway from the suburban sprawl of board games, and stated that it was unappreciated. It was nervous and irritable. I admitted it to the clinic for observation.

**History:** *Diplomacy* was created in 1959. It's a classically simple tactical game overlaid on the European map of WWI. You play one of seven "great powers" (such as England, France, Turkey, or Germany) possessing land and naval counters. Briefly stated, a larger stack of counters can knock back a smaller number. What's given *Diplomacy* a cult following over the years is its diplomatic phase, which permits players to wheel and deal, suggest moves, tell secrets, make alliances ... and break them in a second. Remem-

ber that you're not bound by anything you say, and the only winner in *Diplomacy* is, quite simply, the last man standing.

**Symptom:** Anemic appearance. *Diplomacy's* photo-captured AI opponents look good, and the animations, while jumpy, have style. But the all-important European map screen is poor. You can't zoom in to examine specific areas of the map and there is no option to create random maps with new challenges. Nothing has been added to utilize the potential of the PC format to extend the product.

**Symptom:** Loss of cognitive functions. In the original *Diplomacy* you're playing against the most sneaky, devious, and adaptive creatures of all: Humans. I'd hoped that the computer version would offer roughly analogous AI, but it's extremely disappointing. Even on the highest of three set-



Have you ever wondered what billions of non-Europeans thought of it being called "World War I"?

tings, *Diplomacy's* computer-driven opponents can't challenge a boardgame veteran. And let's face facts, most of the potential audience is going to come from those damn grognards.

On the positive side, you can play it via hotseat, network, Internet, MSN Gaming Zone, and e-mail, and it's all implemented flawlessly. But multiplayer options in *Diplomacy* aren't new. That was the whole premise of the original game. Something more was hoped for from its computerization.

**Symptom:** Personality dislocation. *Diplomacy* resolutely maintains that it is still a board game, even though it's been transplanted into another medium. The Game Editor lets you remove and add units, and you can toggle off the diplomatic phase. But think of what the developers could have

added ... the ability to create inherent national biases (for or against) specific AI opponents, an Asian or South American *Diplomacy*, with new opponent images, a sci-fi or fantasy world *Diplomacy*, a *Diplomacy* that supplemented ground and naval forces with air strikes. Think a little, won't you?

**Conclusion:** While *Diplomacy* still receives great support from its old friends, I can't see it making many new ones in a medium which already provides numerous games with far more extensive options. I suggest the application of behavior modifiers to its parent company, Hasbro/Microprose. Come on guys, you're a computer company. Put out computer games.

— BARRY BRENESAL still beats Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung of the original *Diplomacy*



World leaders practice their special U.N. Macarena number.

**GRAPHICS** Attractively stylish. The AI opponents look good enough but the European map sucks.

**SOUND** Uninspiring. They didn't even use the seven nations' national anthems.

**DEPTH** Poor AI limits the quality of the game's greatest asset — diplomatic wheeling and dealing.

**DESIGN** Hidebound. They had an opportunity to do so much more — and blew it.

**PLUSES**

- + Excellent multiplayer options
- + Intuitive diplomacy interface
- + Accurately recreates the original

**MINUSES**

- Poor AI
- Unimaginative design
- Just downright disappointing

**RATING** 3

PUBLISHER → Hasbro Interactive  
REQUIRED → P200, 32MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM,  
150MB hard drive, full MechWarrior 3

DEVELOPER → Zipper Interactive  
IDEAL → PII 400, 64MB RAM, 12+MB Direct  
3D card, 335MB hard drive

# MechWarrior 3: Pirate's Moon

ACCELE-RATED

Great lighting, exploding terrain, and sharp textures across varied landscapes, not to mention highly detailed Mechs and smooth framerate in both D3D and Glide, across a variety of resolution choices.

## Pirate's Moon? No, too easy

When the mantle of FASA's *MechWarrior* series was passed to Microprose, and after much muddling, Zipper Interactive was finally able to make the third real game in the series, *MechWarrior 3*. Competition from *Heavy Gear 2*, and concerns over bugs, AI, or a short campaign might have stolen their wind. But the awesome look and cool 3D engine came through in fine style.

For the *Pirate's Moon* Expansion Pack the 3D engine is still excellent, the Mechs look great, and that heavy feeling of war is ever-present. Admittedly, the 20-mission single-player game still goes by a bit too quickly, and while the AI is suitably aggressive, it isn't too smart. Enemies cope fine in open spaces and in close-range combat, but it's possible to hit them from a distance without them responding. Additionally, their pathfinding messes up around obstacles and your clan mates are often fatally slow.

This time around, the game is divided into two sections — 10

missions revolving around the pirates in the game, and 10 wherein you pilot Mechs for the Federation. The missions focus on either base attacking or defending, and amidst the varied and great looking backdrop of the planet Veil, the action is exciting and entertaining. Control is comprehensive and complex, but still easy to get into, and virtually identical to the original *MechWarrior 3*.

Aside from the 20 new single-player missions, there are six new BattleMechs, the most interesting of which is the diminutive Power Suit Elemental. Night missions have also been added, along with four new multiplayer maps, but none of the additions and enhancements are going to make anyone change their opinion about the game. This add-on is for *MechWarrior 3* fans who wanted more, and on that level it delivers.

The problem is that it might not deliver enough. Aside from a rather short campaign, the multiplayer

additions are on the light side. The expansion pack was due to have a slew of new team games and multiplayer options, but standard and team deathmatches, and attack/defend games are the only options. These games are fun, and as such, a welcome addition, but they don't stretch the scope of Mech combat.

Another disappointment with this pack is the lack of any cinematic set-up. The narrated mission briefings and pilot chatter during missions are well done, but more focus on fleshing out the story would have been appreciated — particularly for those who aren't BattleTech universe aficionados. Of course, since this is only going to appeal to existing fans, hard-nosed Mech players are likely to have already digested the convoluted world history. Minor complaints aside, this is a solid, entertaining addition to an excellent, yet unappreciated game.

— JASON D'APRILE is all about those Mechs!

**GRAPHICS** Graphically excellent, with detailed Mechs, awesome explosions, and smooth, gorgeous terrain.

**SOUND** Top-notch sound effects resonate with great bass in the explosions. Really cool.

**DEPTH** Mechs are complex machines, and the variety allows for a wide array of tactics.

**DESIGN** Fun, action-packed levels that you'll eat up like candy. It's a shame there aren't more of 'em.

**PLUSES**

- + Fantastic graphics and sound
- + Excellent playability
- + Entertaining missions with lots of great action

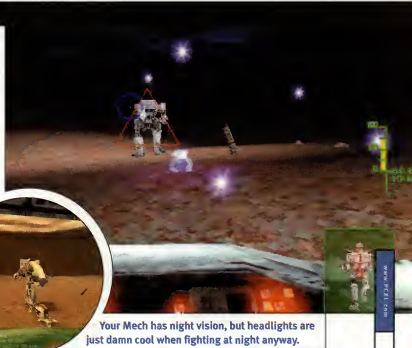
**MINUSES**

- Campaign is still too damn short
- More multiplayer needed
- AI is still lacking
- Doesn't push the genre forward

**RATING** 7



Another satellite uplink bites the dust.



Your Mech has night vision, but headlights are just damn cool when fighting at night anyway.

PUBLISHER → 3DO  
 REQUIRED → P2 23, 32MB RAM, 200MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM, 4MB video card

DEVELOPER → 3DO  
 IDEAL → P1 264, 64MB RAM, 8X CO-ROM, 3D accelerator card

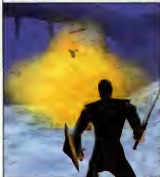
# Crusaders of Might and Magic

➤ ACCELE-RATED

When playing on an Athlon 700 with a TNT4 Ultra and even on a PIII 500 with a 3D Prophet card, the game crashed on numerous occasions. When it was working, it looked solid, but certainly not spectacular.

When RPG stands for "Real Pathetic Game"

**Y**ou would think combining an RPG with action-packed gameplay would be a good thing. Think about it — developing a character while slaying enemies with your various weapons and utilizing an arsenal of spells — it sounds promising. However, after playing *Crusaders of Might and Magic*, that concept has been bludgeoned in a pit of weak-ass gameplay and predictable storyline, spat on by awkward controls, and



This is your buddy who kills bad guys for you. Cool huh?

mocked by pathetic voiceovers. And that's just for starters.

Your character, Drake, is a loner out to avenge the death of his family, who have been killed by the Legion of the Fallen. Joining the High Guard, Drake embarks on a crusade to rid the lands of the undead bastards and avenge his family's death. Yawn. In the pursuit of this endeavor, Drake explores five distinct realms, hacking various enemies along the way with swords, battle-axes, war hammers, and maces, or frying them with over 20 different spells. These spells range from the usual fireball and lightning bolt to the snap-freeze (allowing you to encase an enemy in ice), as well as the requisite torch, which lights your way through dark areas.

Playing the game from a third-person perspective allows you to see Drake execute pretty fluid movements. Drake can run, walk, jump, climb, roll, and perform vari-



PSX or Dreamcast, maybe, but PC? Yuck!

ous attacks with weapon in hand. Some of the textures on the outdoor environments are quite nice and the lighting effects on many of the spells are very well done, particularly the lightning bolt and snap-freeze spells. Although the graphics engine may look sound, the game continued to crash on a regular basis.

Unfortunately, there is nothing imaginative about the story or how it develops. It's linear and most of all, extremely painful to play. Worse yet, having RPG elements in the game doesn't help matters. Sure, you can develop your character, gain experience, use spells, and incorporate the rudimentary inventory system, but what good is it when the game isn't worth playing? Upon launching the game, the



music is pretty overwhelming and for good reason. Once you turn off the music to hear what's going on, you're treated to pathetic voice acting and weak sound effects — total crap.

You would think with such a great lineage as *Might and Magic*, 3DO could have developed a kick-ass action title. They have all the ingredients right at their fingertips, but ultimately, their execution failed. This is one adventure you can blow off.

— TOM HAM is *a crusader*. Far something — something that's mighty and magical

**GRAPHICS** The only positive thing, Drake's movements are smooth and some of the spell effects are cool.

**SOUND** Weak-ass sound effects and pathetic voice acting ... like fingernails on a chalkboard.

**DEPTH** None whatsoever — typical spells and typical weapons. As generic as a trip to Sam's.

**DESIGN** The storyline could have used development and the gameplay could have been more challenging.

## + PLUSES

- + Nice character movements
- + Cool spell effects
- + Decent music
- + You don't have to buy it

## - MINUSES

- Bad story
- Bad gameplay
- Bad voice acting
- It's just bad

**RATING** 3

# Sid Meier's Antietam

ACCELRATED

Nothing hardware-accelerated here. As far as graphics go, look at the first two words in the title ... that should tell you that the graphics are quite possibly the worst in the history of warstems.

More detail than you can shake a bayonet at

**M**ost wargames are nothing more than chess variants in costume, as I once observed to a drunken grognard. He nearly removed my spleen with a bayonet. (It was at a convention, and he was Finnish. It's a long story.) But think about this for a moment: Whoever heard of real life soldiers moving and attacking as ordered every time, generals working in perfect harmony, or a chain-of-command that functions without a single flaw?

No conflict was more dependent upon the talents, personalities, and quirks of its officers and recruits than the American Civil War. But with a single exception (more on that later) no game has treated the ACW as anything more than a series of clever exercises between abstract units — until *Sid Meier's Antietam*.

As much as I enjoyed *Sid Meier's Gettysburg* (*SMG*), it had too many holdovers from "the perfect soldier" wargaming mentality. By contrast, *SMA*'s units will only cross rivers by using bridges or searching for largely invisible fords, and they won't accept orders during

melee — they're too busy slaughtering and getting slaughtered.

Historical accuracy buffs will drool over the lovingly contoured 3D terrain that matches the actual battlefield in great detail, including the presence of sunken roads, bridges, orchards, and cornfields that affect attacking and defensive capabilities. USA and CSA troops sport the wide variety of uniforms (Union and Confederate Zouaves, Berdan's Sharpshooters, the Louisiana Tigers, etc.) that actually made up each side. Instead of the Blue/Gray dichotomy employed for Hollywood's benefit. Casualties are broken down after a battle by brigade. In all, eight types of artillery are deployed.

On the downside, there's no getting around the unimpressive visuals. *SMA*'s smudgy, 256-color, 640x480 graphics are its single drawback. Armchair veterans are perfectly willing to settle for less, but it won't help attract the casual



Tiny writing and ugliness everywhere you look.

PC gamer in the way Sierra's beautiful but brain-dead *Civil War Generals 2* managed.

There are 17 historical and speculative scenarios of differing lengths and complexity that can be played from either side, plus a random scenario generator for unlimbered replay. *SMA* supports up to six players in multiplayer mode on the Zone, Internet, or via LAN.

Among the competition, Interactive Magic's *American Civil War* deserves honorable mention for the way it factored in the arbitrariness of leaders. (You don't tell AP Hill to hold back his forces and stay calm. You don't tell McClellan to launch a swift, coordinated attack. You don't expect PCXL

readers to know who these people are, but we're here to educate, too.) But *IM*'s game was severely plagued by bugs, even after several updates. That's not the case with *SMA*, which runs smoothly out of the box.

Finally, let us bow down and pay homage to that slim *SMA* DVD-style box itself. It's deceptive advertising to sell game boxes the size of the Yellow Pages that contain nothing more than a single CD. Maybe Firaxis will start a new honest trend in regards to game marketing. Yeah, right.

— BARRY BRENESAL *knows tons of tasteless jokes supposedly told by President Lincoln*



Command slips away and the troops take over ... just like they did at Antietam. (We assume — we're not much for history.)

<b>GRAPHICS</b>	This is Sid Meier — it's bad. As always, the graphics keep this game from the "killer" status.	<b>PLUSES</b>	+ Unparalleled historical accuracy + Plenty of scenarios + Great AI
<b>SOUND</b>	Lots of monotonous drums become annoying before long. But I did like the rebel yell.	<b>MINUSES</b>	- Poor 3D graphics - Poor in-game help - Still a bit slow
<b>DEPTH</b>	Nothing deep in the civil war department, but all the commands, weaponry, and stats you desire.		
<b>DESIGN</b>	Come on, this is Sid Meier — it's fantastic. It's so great that it makes up for the piss-poor graphics.		
<b>RATING</b>		<b>8</b>	



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# Sammy Sosa's High Heat Baseball

The best baseball game on the planet is coming back

It isn't the prettiest game ever released, but *High Heat 2000* is easily the best playing baseball game ever made for the PC. The com-

bination of control, realism, and an amazing pitcher/batter showdown give the game addictive qualities similar to smack (we assume, but we wouldn't know for sure). The

millennium has come and gone and *High Heat* is ready for another season.

Cosmetically, not much has changed for 2002. There is an improved graphics engine, which makes the players look slightly better than in last year's iteration, and some of the graphic design and presentation has been sharpened. However, where the real advances are set to take place is the gameplay. Better AI, more realistic ball physics, and even more detailed player ratings should make *HH2002* even better than 2000.

The early version of *High Heat* we've been playing is already more playable than anything VR Sports has ever released and the graphics don't suck. The addition of Sammy Sosa's name shouldn't soil a great game, and it might even help sales in Chicago and the

Dominican Republic. However, we really couldn't care less if this was called *John Rocker's High Heat Baseball 2002* — it's all about the game, and this one looks good.

The career mode, saved highlights of games, and tweaked fielding engine in *Sammy Sosa's High Heat* have us legitimately excited. In fact we are willing to stake our infamous PCXL reputation on the line and say that *High Heat 2002* will not disappoint — we guarantee it.



John Rocker prepares to deliver a racist slur.

New animations for fielding make the experience even better.

## FANTASY SPORTS FRAG

### OLIVER STONE

**WHY WE HATE HIM** → Being huge sports fans, we are always on the lookout for a good sports movie. With few exceptions (*Bull Durham*, *Hoochers*), we have been sorely disappointed. But when we saw the previews for *Any Given Sunday*, we were legitimately excited. Cameron Diaz, Al Pacino, Lawrence Taylor, James Woods, Jamie Foxx (uhh, scratch that last one), and Oliver Stone directing — how could we go wrong? Well, the furry-browed one found a way. Isn't it bad enough he tortured us with the self-indulgent *Natural Born Killers*? Now the drugged-up, out-of-touch filmmaker is messing with football. The amount of clichés, thin characters, corny dialog, and senseless vomit-inducing camera work in *Any Given Sun* is mind-boggling. Worse yet, fat-cat movie critics (who wouldn't know a football if we stuffed it up their collective asses) gave this movie good reviews. We spit on them.

**HOW HE SHOULD BE FRAGGED** → The best way to take down Oliver Stone is obviously some sort of conspiracy, so here it goes. We nominate him for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Director As A Totally Unconvincing Character in His Own Movie, and Most Self-involved Egotistical Prick categories at the Oscars and fix it so he wins. When he approaches the stage for his fourth award of the night we have Lawrence Taylor urinate on him from above the set. The toxic contents of LT's urine, mixed with Oliver's chemical imbalance is likely to set fire to the clueless director. Maybe next time he won't mess with the Lord's game.



### WE SHALL CALL HIM ... MINI-SAMMY

As our issue-long tribute to all things diminutive continues, we present you with this exclusive interview with Mini-Sammy. Since the little fella can't talk, he could only answer our questions by bobbing his head up or down. Read on and learn the secrets of a great homerun hitter.



**PCLX:** Is it true that 3D0 is paying you tons of money just so they can use your name on the game, box?

**MINI-SAMMY:** Yes (some editors also think they heard some laughter coming from the direction of Mini-Sammy).

**PCLX:** Have you ever played a computer baseball game in your life?

**MINI-SAMMY:** No.

**PCLX:** Is it true that when you take two fingers to your chest, that is how they that you are really saying, "Stupid Americans Piss Off" in Dominica?

**MINI-SAMMY:** Yes.

**PCLX:** Little Sammy, is it true you and Mark McGwire are "much more than friends" in the off-season?

**MINI-SAMMY:** It is a "bobby" — jokingly up and down — we think, it's hard to tell with "bobbing" which direction the little sacker's head is going, but we'll take that as a yes.

**PCLX:** Are "little people" inherently funny?

**MINI-SAMMY:** At this point his head came off — we'll take that as a yes.

**DEVELOPER** → Access Software  
**PUBLISHER** → Microsoft  
**REQUIRED** → P166, 32MB RAM,  
 16MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM  
**IDEAL** → P11 300, 64MB RAM, 772MB  
 hard drive, 24X CD-ROM, 32-bit 3D  
 accelerator card

# Links LS 2000

► **ACCELE-RATED**

Links LS 2000 looks spectacular with a TNT2 Ultra. Using a Voodoo 3 3500 is also impressive, however the graphics aren't as crisp as the TNT2.

So realistic you can smell the fried chicken and watermelon

**J**ust as on the tour, competition to be best in the golf game scene is pretty fierce. The venerable *Jack Nicklaus* series and the widely popular *PGA/Tiger Woods* game from EA Sports have all competed at the highest level. And then there is the *Links* series. Without a doubt, Access Software has continuously delivered the most realistic golf game experience to the PC. Whether you're touting the brilliant ball physics or the realistic lays (of the golf ball, pews) or the slew of options or customization features, *Links* always dominates.

To be quite honest though, *Links LS 2000* feels more like an upgrade than a full-fledged new product —

still not a bad thing. There are five new courses in *Links LS 2000* including St. Andrews Links New and Jubilee Courses, Indiana's Covered Bridge, and Hawaii's Mauna Kea and Hapuna Courses. *Links LS 2000* has over 30 different modes of play (MOPs), including Stroke Play, Skins, Bestball, Match Play, and new for 2000, the Fuzzy Zoeller's Wolf Challenge. It sounds interesting right? In reality, the Wolf Challenge is just another Skins game where each hole has a designated dollar value assessed to it. Funny thing is, it plays a lot like the other MOPs in the game.

Welcome additions are the new amateur level features that make getting into the game much easier, including a Quick Start that gets you playing in two mouse-clicks. A new EasySwing option (which is perfect for newbies) requires just one click to hit the ball straight. The all-new Links Lessons and Tips supply information on every aspect of the game including club selection, types of strokes, aiming and how to putt that "goddamn ball" correctly.

Like certain other things in life, the stroke is vitally important. *Links 2000* lets you bludgeon



With the new EasySwing option, newbies can jump right in.

your way through with the EasySwing, take two or three clicks with the classic style, or go for broke with the Powerstroke. This latter option is similar to those incorporated in the newest golf games whereby shot distance and accuracy is determined by your mouse-motion. Powerful wrist muscles help pummel the ball, but accuracy is all in the feel. (It's amazing that this schtick has lasted so long.) It's momentarily playable until you're frustrated and revert to the classic methods ...

Surprisingly, the weakest area in *Links LS 2000* has to be the graphics engine. Don't get us wrong, the game is gorgeous and the overall look of the courses is great, but you gotta wonder about these digitized players. They end up looking like cardboard cutouts on screen. Also the trees and scenery need some work, they still look like cheap bitmap leftovers from the Sega Genesis days. And the spectators? Don't get us started.

With new fluff options such as tweaking the wind, cloud, fog, and haze levels, variable camera angles, great online play and the superlative physics engine among the huge customization list, *LS 2000* offers some new elements over the 1999 version. It's probably just enough for registered users to extend their commitment to the franchise (and use the \$15 rebate), but we'll be expecting far more in version 2001.

— **TOM HAM** got to play at Pebble Beach — for free. So there!



**GRAPHICS** Aside from crappy digitized player models, courses look really great.

**SOUND** Realistic sound effects, cool camera sounds, and adequate play-by-play.

**CONTROL** New options with the swing meter, but there's nothing better than the classic two- or three-click.

**REALISM** The physics engine feels realistically difficult, but the amateur levels give it greater accessibility.

## + PLUSES

- + Great physics engine
- + Lessons and tips for beginners
- + Can import all 25 add-on courses

## - MINUSES

- Crappy player models
- Lame looking landscapes, i.e. trees and shrubs
- Needs better commentary

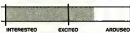
**RATING** 8

Spectators may be stupider than they appear.



DEVELOPER → Housemarque  
 PUBLISHER → InFamous  
 RELEASE DATE → Mid-February

## INTEREST GAUGE



## THE HYPE

A snowboarding game that stays true to the sport. Maybe it will come packaged with illegal substances.

## THE HURDLE

Snowboarding games have long been the staple of consoles. Will the PC market pick up on the trend?

## THE HIT

A great physics engine is at the heart of recreating the snowboarding experience. That seems to be in place.



Rossignol should be paying a photo fee for this shot.

# Boarder Zone

## The prettiest game on two edges

InFamous is set to buck a disappointing trend of crappy console port snowboarding games by putting style and quality in to their PC entry, *Boarder Zone*. The back catalog of snowboarding titles has tried to represent the sport with what amounts to "just another racer" and that's been their major drawback in capturing the essence of snow sliding.

Housemarque is a Finnish developer (where we assume they have a lot of snow), and the company is attempting to represent precisely both the free-ride and competition aspects of snowboarding.

Game play will be divided up among the Arcade mode (jump into the free-ride, half-pipe, or big air sections), Championship (contest style), and Multiplayer mode (network race against up to eight players). Tricks play a large part in the game and are pulled off with an intuitive system of spin/flip controls and grab combos. Still a few months from completion, the free-



This is known as a "Butt Shot" in the snowboarding world.

ride aspect of the arcade mode is great fun.

The graphics engine offers up a fantastic visual feast. The terrain is varied with different snow conditions that affect riding speed and handling. Deep powder covers your board and boots, causing you to slow down, while ice will give

you poor control but will speed your baggy-panted-ass up. Boarders leave tracks behind them, which aside from everything else, just looks cool. Four

different riding conditions will also be available: Bluebird day, snowing, sunset, and night runs.

In addition, the mountainous areas are realistic and interesting. Cliff drops and booters are scattered throughout, as well as trees and man-made obstacles such as Snow Cats, fencing, and roadways. Three different mountain areas each feature three tracks, a big air jump, and a halfpipe. The Alpine location is a playground of natural terrain with steep trails, icy caves, and sharp rock formations. In the Forest, tight runs wind along rivers, and finally, the Village is a well-groomed resort style run with cool out-of-bounds areas to explore.

As of now, *Boarder Zone* doesn't feature licensed pro riders, which is a shame, nor does it currently feature a board park. Still, even the preview version was fun, setting the promise of providing a winter-tastic time to both "core boarders and curious non-riders alike."

### WHAT ABOUT...?

IT SEEMS AS THOUGH InFamous has captured the core essence of the sport of snowboarding, but they just might have missed a few of the other important features that make snow sliding what it is today.

PRO RIDERS → Any winter resort has to have a healthy supply of cash. It's hansom-er modeling the latest and greatest in sexy snow gear.

DRIVING IN THE SNOW → Clunk, clunk, clunk, clunk! Snow chains suck. But so does sliding off an icy road.

BROKEN BONES → Nothing says "It's a bad-ass snowboarder" for carterers but "fracture" more than a butterfly fracture and a big plaster cast.

LIFT LINES → Not much good can be said about lift lines, other than it's a prime locale for spotting heretics in tight ski pants.

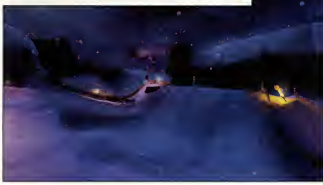
STUPID-ASS HATS → We don't know who thought those jester hats were a good idea... they weren't.



NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL A FINE... SLEEZE



BobaFuct  
 34,009



Look at all the pretty riding conditions: Sunset, day, and night.

# WHERE THE GAMES ARE BESIDES YOUR MOM'S HOUSE

**M**ost of our online gaming is done over our company LAN against the fat bastards (for lack of a better, or more descriptive term) at *PC Gamer*, but occasionally we'll go online to test the mettle of real Internet competition. We've never really had the need to test out the different gaming services that thousands of our readers use. However, we decided that we had neglected them long enough, and an in-depth look at the good, the bad, and the incredibly annoying of online gaming services was long overdue. Heck, we got to go online and play games that's not so bad ... at least it didn't seem like it would be.

## ▶ POGO [www.pogo.com](http://www.pogo.com)

**PLAYERS ONLINE:** 14,589

**FEATURED GAMES:** Card games, crossword puzzles, Keno, Video Poker, Bingo, Roulette, and Trivia (no real games here)

**RATINGS:** Yes, but in the card games only

**TOURNAMENTS:** Player set-up and occasional sponsored tourney

**PRIZES:** Jackpots in Keno and Video Poker ranged from \$61 to \$75, although a news story

explained how somebody won \$1,441 dollars in Keno

**INTERFACE:** Smart implementation of score, chat, game, and everything, but the whole thing takes too damn long to load due to excessive ads

**THE PLAYERS:** Sad, sad people who spend all day playing Keno for the chance to win \$4.67

**THE COMMUNITY:** The only service to split all the tables into age groups, thus arbitrarily segregating players — weird

**HIGHLIGHTS:** The Extreme Keno room, where anything goes (see "Online Nuisance" for more). The sports crossword was surprisingly interesting, and video poker can be addicting

**LOWLIGHTS:** *Pogo.com* used to be TEN, the host site of the PGL; now far removed from their roots, there aren't any real games to be found here. Unless you count Keno

**RATING (OUT OF 10):** 3



## ▶ WON [www.won.net](http://www.won.net)

**PLAYERS ONLINE:** (No exact numbers but there were 2,050 *Half-Life* servers alone)

**FEATURED GAMES:** Anything by Sierra, plus support for almost all other games

**RATINGS:** Caves Ladder ([www.cavesladder.com](http://www.cavesladder.com)) handles all of the ratings

**TOURNAMENTS:** Pretty regular tournaments for Sierra's games

**PRIZES:** Good loot for the Sierra game tournaments

**INTERFACE:** The Game Detector is the most detailed interface of any gaming server, but it also takes forever and a year to load

**THE PLAYERS:** A wide variety, but some great competition on the Sierra games

**THE COMMUNITY:** By Sierra for Sierra fans

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Incredible number of players for *Half-Life*, *Homeworld*, etc., and the best mod/map integrator around (automatic updates constantly)

**LOWLIGHTS:** There isn't any real reason to go to *Won.net* since all of Sierra's games feature an excellent built-in game finder. Cut out the middleman and launch straight from your game

**RATING (OUT OF 10):** 5

## ▶ HEAT [www.heat.net](http://www.heat.net)

**PLAYERS ONLINE:** 13,176

**FEATURED GAMES:** *10SIX*, *Flesh Feast*, *Vigilance*, *Scud*, and some other crap SegaSoft titles are exclusive, but they also have almost every game imaginable

**RATINGS:** You earn degree points that are redeemed for games, T-shirts, and other assorted goodies at the Heat store

**TOURNAMENTS:** Regular tournaments on the big games (*Quake II*)

**PRIZES:** Degrees mostly, but enough to "buy" something decent if you actually manage to come away with a win

**INTERFACE:** Possibly the most moronic software package ever put together. The setup requires you to change your autoexec.bat file — no thank you

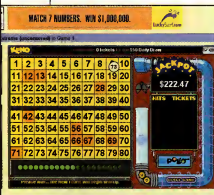
**THE PLAYERS:** Not many

**THE COMMUNITY:** Degree whores will do anything to get degrees, including preying on newbies

**HIGHLIGHTS:** *10SIX* is a pretty ambitious title in a persistent world and is only available here

**LOWLIGHTS:** The software is buggy, DOS-based, and makes you change your autoexec.bat

**RATING (OUT OF 10):** 2



Hearts games online are filled with polite people ripe for trash talking

catOne11: ok i'm going back to turrel later yall



## ▶ THE ZONE [WWW.ZONE.COM](http://WWW.ZONE.COM)

**PLAYERS ONLINE:** 55,772  
**FEATURED GAMES:** *Age Of Empires II, Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator, Rainbow Six, and Rogue Spear* are all excellent with a ton of players

**RATINGS:** Yes, although there are plenty of ways to cheat (and plenty of people willing to do it as well)  
**TOURNAMENTS:** So many, in fact, that you can pretty much join one every hour in some games

**PRIZES:** The glory of victory and the occasional T-shirt. Definitely the worst prizes of any gaming service  
**INTERFACE:** It's fast, simple, and has all the information you need — the best of the bunch

**THE PLAYERS:** Some excellent *Rogue Spear* and *AOE II* players make for some great games and the card players are the best competition on the web as well

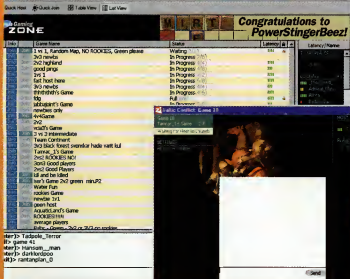
**THE COMMUNITY:** Pretty much just a place for a bunch of people to play games, the way it should be  
**HIGHLIGHTS:** Number of players, quality of games, quality of players, and an excellent interface  
**LOWLIGHTS:** Ratings whores will often quit just before losing a game so they don't lose points — and they aren't punished significantly. Also, at peak traffic times, it can be very slow  
**RATING (OUT OF 10):** 9

## ▶ MPLAYER [WWW.MPLAYER.COM](http://WWW.MPLAYER.COM)

**PLAYERS ONLINE:** 18,567  
**FEATURED GAMES:** Currently the only service to have *Quake III Arena* up and running, plus they have pretty much every multiplayer game ever released for you to play  
**RATINGS:** Yes, but only in the card games (*Quake III* ratings would be a very cool addition)

**TOURNAMENTS:** Daily King Of The Hill tournaments in a variety of games are pretty cool  
**PRIZES:** Anything from T-shirts to gaming modems  
**INTERFACE:** Not near enough information and the graphics are just confusing. I want to know how many people, what kind of game, etc., without having to enter a game

**THE PLAYERS:** Played a game of Team Deathmatch *Quake III* and won 50 to 0 against two people. Definitely a variety of skill levels  
**THE COMMUNITY:** Importing your face into your profile leads to a player list that looks like the home page for [www.fugly.com](http://www.fugly.com)  
**HIGHLIGHTS:** Lowest ping times in *Quake III*, some really cool tournaments, and the best variety of games anywhere  
**LOWLIGHTS:** Much of the time was spent trying to get the moron in charge of the room to launch the game. When he couldn't figure it out, someone else would try. This would continue for hours  
**RATING (OUT OF 10):** 6



## THE ONLINE GAMING SERVICES

WHY	WHY NOT
A sense of community	Community is overrated
Prizes	Most of 'em are pretty crap
Ease of use	Hah
Ratings	Ratings are like crack
Free Games	You get what you pay for
Always someone to play	But they are usually crap
Perfect for the friendless	Being friendless is crap

## ▶ THE ONLINE NUISANCE

Believe it or not there is actually a room on [pogo.com](http://pogo.com) called Extreme Keno where "anything goes." To test this theory, we were as extreme as humanly possible. The following is an actual transcript (with the especially obscene obscenities replaced with words that rhyme with them).

**PCXL Trash:** X-treme ducking keno, baby. Any punk ass ditches want a piece of my ass?  
**Overlord:** Hi PCXL  
**PCXL Trash:** duck you, you little ditch  
**Nancy32:** Now, now PCXL, that isn't very friendly  
**PCXL Trash:** I thought this room was supposed to be EXTREME you ducking little babies  
**PCXL Trash:** This is cool I can swear and none of you little ditches can do

pit about it. Bunt, ditch, ass, whore!  
**PCXL Trash:** Come on you ducking little panzies — take off the skirt and start cussing  
**PCXL Trash:** Extreme Keno is for a bunch of girls. You're the biggest pussies I've ever seen. Maybe you should go to the "I just broke my hip Keno Room" you blue-haired motherfuckers ... [transmission was cut off as we were booted from the Extreme "anything goes" Keno Room]



Two half moons and one full moon in *Drakan*.

At sign-up, see "Who's your daddy?" as the security question, then "forget" your login and make that call.



# GIRLS



The only website  
for rabid gamers  
with insatiable  
appetites  
for digital  
entertainment!  
We've got hot, fresh  
DAILY content for the  
obsessive gamer... tips, tricks,  
cheats, news, previews, reviews,  
downloads, demos and more.

Get it Daily... you know you want it!

# GUNS

Get  
your  
Daily  
dose

# GORE

[www.DailyRadar.com](http://www.DailyRadar.com)



# Polygons On Strike

Claims They Are "Tired Of Being Pushed Around"

**A**fter bitter negotiations between the United Polygon Workers Union and leading 3D card manufacturers failed this past January, polygons around the world are hitting the picket lines and demanding "more humane treatment of polygonal and multi-sided graphics images."

The union was angered when 3D chipset manufacturers 3Dfx and Nvidia refused to halt the pushing of polygons, even claiming that thousands more polygons would get pushed around in coming years. January's walkout was the culmination of increasing frustration among polygons.

"My polygonal brothers won't sit idly by waiting to be pushed through some tiny pipeline," announced Polygon #5,215,600. "We will rise up and demand fair treatment against these sweatshop conditions." Extremist organizations such as the Polygon Liberation Army have gone so far as to sabotage newly released games

like *Ultima Ascension* and *Braveheart* with crashes that prevent the games from being played.

Publishers say this "bottleneck terrorism" won't halt further sales.

Interestingly, the World Pixel-Textel League has no opinion on the dispute. "Hey, we're just glad to be getting eight-tap anisotropic filtered bump-mapping," said a relieved spokespixel. ➤



Next up: Protesting the barbaric "skinning" of polys.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### INDUSTRY SHOCKER: GAME QUALITY CAUSES CANCELLATION

**I**n what has been described as "inconceivable," by industry experts, Infogrames recently cancelled their *Mission Impossible* port for the PC, claiming, "the quality of the game wasn't high enough to release." With this sort of quality control, PCXL fears the PC gaming industry could be in dire straits. According to our very own crap-o-meter we estimate that only one or two games would be released each year — and none of them from Infogrames.

### Company To Release Game

A completely unknown developer is currently working on a game set for release in Fall 2000. The game will feature characters you can control and other intelligent characters you can somehow kill. As usual, the game will be "epic," "involving," and "will do things no other game has ever done." More updates as they become somewhat relevant and interesting.



Known as the mysterious Project C, this game looks and sounds utterly forgettable.

## FANTASY FRAG

### Verne Troyer, AKA "Mini-Me"

**WHY WE HATE HIM** → The Mini-Me shtick in *Austin Powers 2* saved it from being completely unwatchable, but let's face it, a Muppet could've pulled that off. Now, the runt's everywhere! Selling "Mini-Me" merchandise on his official website, suffocated by super-fit naked bunnies in *Ployboy*, on TV shows, making public appearances. Hell, he was even in the freakin' Macy's Thanksgiving parade ... and he's always surrounded by a bevy of hot babes who say size doesn't matter. They're clearly lying — and proving that it's *wollet* size that really matters.

**HOW HE SHOULD BE FRAGGED** → Once Verne figures out nobody's casting 278" midgets as romantic leads opposite Denise Richards, his short-lived fame will be dwarf-tossed out the window. But just in case he gets lucky as "Vern the Human Dildo" in fetish porn, we think the best revenge would be to make him grow. Then instead of being a tiny, weird-looking guy, he'll be just another average-sized, weird-looking guy — just like us.

### The Engine Formerly Known As Prince Of Persia 3D

According to the journalistic-sounding newshounds of the web, Headfirst's ... uhh ... first-person RPG, *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth*, will be based on the NDI net immerse engine. This is the same engine that powered such gaming goodness as *Prince of Persia 3D*, *Panzer General 3D Assault*, *Simon the Sorcerer 3D* (also by Headfirst), and *FLW Tournament Bass Fishing*. Headfirst is also looking to relocate their headquarters to a swamp in Florida that they got a real deal on.

### Related?

Our roving PCXL reporters recently found the following news tidbits, and noticed a strange connection among our very own staffers ...

*Man Swallows 50 Crack Pipes Whole*

— Rob Smith misses week of work with "the flu"

*Gwyneth Paltrow forgoes \$7,000 at airport security*

— PCXL hires new guy Matt Holmes for approximately the same price ➤

# PORN PILOT PRO™ PUTS A PARTY IN YOUR PALM

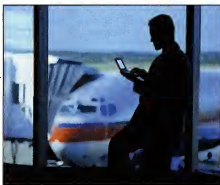
## New Handheld Revolutionizes Smut-Peddling

**H**ustler founder Larry Flynt shocked the handheld computer industry at this year's Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas by announcing a "revolutionary new way to look at smut" from anywhere in the world.

The Porn Pilot Pro, a 4-oz. wireless portable mini-organizer is designed to scour the Internet for erotic images, download them instantly, and then display them on a built-in 16-bit color 3x5" screen. It will be marketed primarily towards business travelers, college students, and those without access to a home computer. The unit will include a proprietary graphics program called Pornoshop, optimized to manipulate naked pictures by automatically editing "undesirable"

aspects like excess cellulite, armpit hair, and general skankiness. Users can control the size of body parts to suit their particular interest and Pornoshop's unique filtering system will automatically make all modifications according to the user's specifications. Says a spokesperson: "This is a technological breakthrough for the discerning customer who wants perfect porn, every time!"

Flynt also announced the creation of a new company to make and distribute the devices. Flyntek, a wholly owned subsidiary of



Soon you'll be able to make the friendly skies sooo much friendlier. Thanks Larry!

Larry Flynt Publications, will retain all rights to the Porn Pilot Pro technology as the sole manufacturer. While the Porn Pilot Pro's most obvious task will be the collection of porn images, support is also planned for hot XXX e-mail and sex chat. Other products, such as Live Nude Videoconferencing are in the early design stages, confirmed a source close to the project.

Flynt's enthusiasm for the new venture is clear. "This is a great day for pornography lovers," he slurred at a Flyntek press conference. "Enjoying filth no longer has to take place in the privacy of your own home."

For the finest in news that is almost unbelievable enough to be true, stick with **PCLX**.



"Ehhhh ... uhhhhh. Free speech and uhh, nekkid girls ... ehh ..."



The new millennium has truly blessed us all. Now all we need is our very own 24K Gold wheelchair.

## THE POWER METER

Anyone reading this? You should. This is where the games industry finds out who's standing where on the power scale. Really.

THIS LAST WEEK'S RICHES

1 1

**MICROSOFT** → No sign of their juggernaut slowing. *Y&K* brings *Starlancer*, *Loose Cannons*, *Freelancer*, *Crimson Skies*, and *Motocross Madness 2*. **EIDOS** → Eidos has one of the best potential line-ups for 2000 with several high profile products (and *Daikatan*, allegedly).

3 7

**REB STORM** → Profits up 400% with *Rainbow Six* and *Rogue Spear*. The former still has more people playing on the Zone than the sequel. This year will be the real test.

4 2

**HASBRO** → The New Year could bring a slide with few quality titles for the hard-core market. Still, appealing to the mainstream hasn't hurt so far.

5 3

**ACTIVISION** → So they shipped a lot of titles, but many stank (*U-82*, *Hidden Evil*), but we still have *Quake III*. More Tek games are coming, too.

6 -

**TALONSOFT** → Potential for a big year with a slew of products. How good they are remains to be seen.

7 10

**INTERPLAY** → Phonscope won't enjoy *Baldur's Gate* sales, but it's still great. More to come as Interplay hopefully overcomes its all-too-long slump.

8 5

**SIERRA** → Critical kudos won't mean squat for the public company as HomeWorld falls to dazzle on retail shelves. The next big thing: *772*.

9 6

**BLIZZARD** → Dropping due to *Diablo II*'s new March release plan. *WarCraft III* now slated for 2002 (just kidding — honest).

10 8

**EPIC GAMES** → *Unreal Tournament* gamers much popular support, but what next for the lauded engine? Er, *Deus Ex* and, er, I'll get me coat.\*

\*English humor (u), courtesy of Rob Smith

NEWSHIRE IN SHORT

**INFOGRAMES** → A high profile company with few standout products. Their PC line-up is weak, but there is life in the *Test Drive* franchise. Buying GT gives hope for resurgence.

# GAMESCAN

THE SALES GUY SELLETH

Gaming advice from PCXL is worth its weight in gold (umm, which is nothing). But who's the last person to give you advice before you buy a game? That's right — the sales guy. So, we're cutting to the chase and letting you know now what he's gonna say a few months down the road.



## LAST CALL

**Developer** → Cutler Creative  
**Publisher** → Simon & Schuster Interactive  
**Release Date** → February 2000  
**Price Check** → Believe it or not, this is a bartending simulator. You man the bar, mix drinks, and satisfy cartoonish customers. At the very least you'll become a better mixologist since *Lost Cool* incorporates real drink recipes into gameplay. The guy on commission at your local software store says → "You like *Sin City 3000?* Man, you've gotta get a load of this game over here. Hey, are you a member of our Discount Club?"



## DEVIL INSIDE

**Developer** → GameSquad  
**Publisher** → Cryo Interactive  
**Release Date** → Q3 2000  
**Price Check** → Ahh, the French. Just when you think they can't possibly get any quirkier, along comes *Devil Inside*. Written by Hubert Charlot, author of the *Alone in the Dark* series, *Devil Inside* is a 3D action/adventure game involving competing paranormal cable TV channels, a semi-demonic investigative reporter, Halloween, and corralling some of Satan's lost souls. Sounds like sweeps week at The WB to us, but we're not French. The guy on commission at your local software store says → "Devil Inside? Sorry, Mrs. Jones, one copy came in and it went directly into the bargain bin. You might be able to find it under that pile of *Recalls*."

# The Heat-O-Meter

MARCH MADNESS EDITION

## WHAT'S HOT

**WHO WANTS TO MAKE DISNEY MILLIONAIRES** → Disney's *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* jumped past action-oriented competition to top the PC game sales charts. Ironically, everyone involved with the game has become a millionaire except the people who bought it.

**QUAKE CLASSIC** → Id released the source code for the original *Quake* to programmers for free as long as they don't make any money from it. Ion Storm is understandably annoyed for having to pay for it and still not make any money from *Dokotono*. Doh!

**AMD VS INTEL** → The two major PC processor manufacturers are in a neck and neck race to produce the fastest chipset. Gee, that's nice and all, guys, but why is my computer case melting?

**W2K** → By the time you read this, Windows 2000 will be on store shelves. Reportedly, it'll finally do everything that Windows 98 was supposed to do two years ago.

**HOT WAX** → *Tomb Raider's* Lara Croft is really 3D now that a French museum has unveiled a wax model of the game character. Hmm ... that's a candle we wouldn't mind lighting.

## WHAT'S COLD

**IRON BAR MIKE** → *Mike Tyson Boxing*, a new game in development at Codemasters, will feature training and career management modes of play, but there's no word yet on which mode will include wife-beating and prison terms. One game tip we can give you now: Biting opponents won't further your career, but misguided licensing deals apparently aren't out of the question.

**ONI NO** → The lead programmer for this year's upcoming action-adventure game, *Oni*, has left the project, but Bungie emphasizes that his departure won't affect the title's late-April release date. That either suggests he wasn't doing much to begin with or this game'll contain more bugs than a rotting log.

**BRAZIL NUTS** → Not exactly riding the crest of the technology curve, Brazil recently banned violent video games like *Doom*, *Mortal Kombat*, and *Duke Nukem* from being sold there. At the rate they're going, they'll be banning *Quake III: Arena* some time around 2005.

**CRADLE RAIDER** → An executive at Core Design, the developer of the *Tomb Raider* series, has been arrested for allegedly attempting to procure sex with a nine-year-old girl. That's one "last revelation" that Core could have done without.

## WHAT THE HELL?

MIDGET EXPLOITATION FILMS

**W**ay before Mini-Me, there was another pint-sized action hero — Weng Weng, international midget of mystery. After starring in 1979's Bond parody *For Your Height Only*, he vanished from the big screen only to reappear 20 years later on DVD. We don't know what happened to Weng Weng, but if you're out there somewhere could you answer us this question: What the hell were you thinking?



**"HE'S SMART, HE'S SEXY, HE'S DANGEROUS, HE'S ... THREE FEET TALL"**





## WOMEN WE LOVE TO PLAY

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Stevie and she was very good at Quake. In fact she even beat celebrated *Doom* designer (and Breck model) John Romero at Quake. In the past couple of years Stevie has pulled an Alyssa Milano, by turning from cute girl into an insanely hot woman. Now Stevie works as a level designer for *Dokotono* and in her spare time managed to lose all of her clothes, wandered into a *Ployboy* magazine photo shoot looking for them, and ended up having a few snaps taken (due to be printed in a coming issue). Sad to say, this "too good to be true" combination of sex appeal and Quake skills is currently taken — by none other than John Romero himself. For this issue of PCXL, Stevie was kind enough to provide expert gaming tips for *Dokotono* and excellent eye candy for the remainder of the mag.



### HOT FOR OTHER TEACHERS



MICHELLE PFEIFFER

**MICHELLE PFEIFFER**

**IN** → *Dangerous Minds*

**TEACHES** → Inner city kids

how to survive

**NUDITY** → No, the little

vixen stud us 'til it again

**INSPIRING MESSAGE** →

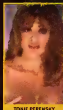
"There are no victims in this

classroom"

**LESSON LEARNED** → Even

the lure of crack couldn't

keep you away from her



TONIE PERENGIY

**TONIE PERENGIY**

**IN** → *Vanity Blues*

**TEACHES** → Sex education

to a shockingly disinter-

ested group of dumb jocks

**NUDITY** → She, too moon

lights as a stripper — so,

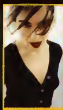
yes. Plenty of it.

**MEMORABLE LINE** →

"Punk, punis, penis"

**LESSON LEARNED** →

Teachers hit it strip, so cool



OLIVIA WILLIAMS

**OLIVIA WILLIAMS**

**IN** → *Rushmore*

**TEACHES** → English

**NUDITY** → No, she wor: fir

too many clothes

**MEMORABLE LINE** → "Do

you think we're going to

have sex?"

**LESSON LEARNED** →

Smart but pitiful geeky kids

don't get laid — ever



MARY KAY LETOURNEAU

**MARY KAY LETOURNEAU**

**IN** → *Prison*

**TEACHES** → Young boys

how to please her

**NUDITY** → W. assume:

**MEMORABLE LINE** →

"Mary Kay Letourneau, the

teacher who had sex with a

13-year-old, was arrested"

**LESSON LEARNED** → We

should've gone to school in

Tacoma, Washington

### GAMESCAN



#### EVERQUEST: RUINS OF KUNARK

Developer → Verant Interactive

Publisher → Sony

Release Date → April 2000

Price Check → Since this is an add-

on pack, we've got the sneaking

suspicion there's going to be some

rat killing involved, only this time it

is the all-new continent of Kunark.

Located south of Faydwer (hey,

how'd I miss a whole continent?),

Kunark has 20 new zones and a new

playable race, the Iksar (lizardmen).

But probably most interesting to

Everquest-ians (Everquest-ites?) is

that you can finally go above the

level 50 limit.

The guy on commission at your

local software store says → "It's

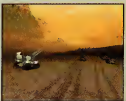
Everquest 2, dude. Expansion pack?

Um... well, I think you can run it

on a 486, but let me check with my

manager. This is my first week here

and I'm not really trained yet."



#### GROUND CONTROL

Developer → Massive Entertainment

Publisher → Sierra

Release Date → Q3 2000

Price Check → Yet another 3D real-

time strategy combat game set after

WWII. We're starting to get a little

paranoid, when every other new

game predicts global devastation.

Why can't one be set in the "Valley

of the Happy Nice People"?

20 competing political factions battle

over alien artifacts found on a

remote colony planet using as many

tanks and big guns as necessary.

The guy on commission at your

local software store says → "Check

out there in our "Apocalyptic

Future" section. That's directly next

to the "Jumping Girls With Big Hoot-

ers" aisle and across from the

"Shine To Frogger 3D."



### TOWER OF THE ANCIENTS

Developer → Finnish Games  
 Publisher → Finnish Games  
 Release Date → 1/24/2000

**Price Check** → From the makers of *Hot Chick 'n' Gear Stix*, *Tower Of The Ancients* is a potentially sacreligious Columns-style 3D puzzle game in which you have to build a tower to evade the wrath of God. This just might be the only game ever to portray the Almighty as a bad guy, but what's not to love about a game that lists "the hand of God" as one of its features. *Tower Of The Ancients* can be bought at

[www.finnishgames.com](http://www.finnishgames.com)

The guy on commission at your local software store says → "Hi, can I help you find anything today? Sorry, never heard of *Tower Of The Ancients*." [3rd Sales Guy comes up] "Hi, can I help you find anything today? Nope, we don't have *Tower Of The Ancients*." [repeat as long as necessary to simulate that "mall store" effect]



### DRONEZ

Developer → Zetha Gamez  
 Publisher → TBA

**Release Date** → Sometime 2000  
**Price Check** → French developer Zetha seems to have ze ... 'ow you zay ... affinity for ze letter Z. Apparently, due to a "hostile environment," everyone in the near future will be trapped inside their homes, their only exercise limited to virtual sports. So what's replaced *Mondy Night Football*?

The guy on commission at your local software store says → "Yeah, we've got *Dronez*. And for the best *Dronez* experience, we recommend you buy the Xtreminator Force Feedback Game Controller, the official *Dronez* action figure set, and the *Dronez* Strategy Guide. Can I ring that up for you?"



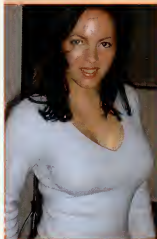
## Get a life with...

# Gia DeCarlo

### SURVIVING THE FRIEND ZONE

**I**n order to better understand women and their particularly confusing ways, you need to recognize some basic differences in the sexes. I'm not talking *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus* crap — just simple truths we should all know.

The first time a man sees a woman he immediately decides under what circumstances or conditions he could have sex with said woman — how many beers, whether she had a cute friend, that kind of thing. On the contrary, the first time a woman meets a man she immediately begins searching for reasons she WOULD-NT sleep with him — hairy back, chipped tooth, unibrow, that kind of thing. It's this tragic misunderstanding that leads to almost every single problem between men and women. One of the biggest problems for some men (the ones who aren't repulsive pigs who no woman would ever give the time of day) is entering that bizarre and inescapable land, I like to call ...



We would give anything to be a tight-fitting white cotton blouse right about now.



Sometimes Gia just can't believe the things that come out of her mouth. Or vice-versa.

## THE FRIEND ZONE

**WHAT IT IS** → An unwanted relationship with a woman, wherein she considers you nothing more than a "friend," while you often stay awake nights considering

**"Let's face facts, the only women you're just friends with are ones you have absolutely no desire to sleep with."**

"more-than-friendly" things you could do to her. Let's face facts, the only women you're "just friends" with are ones you have absolutely no desire to sleep with. You can get all pissy and claim you're above that sort of basic maleness, but you'd be lying and you know it.

**HOW IT HAPPENS** → Simple. Sometimes it's the man's fault for being a sweet, overly sensitive guy who reminds her of puppies more than Porky's

**HOW TO AVOID IT** → There's nothing wrong with being a nice guy, but in order to maintain the appropriate sexual tension you must be ... a man. I don't mean belching, farting, and calling

## ► ARE YOU IN THE ZONE?

→ She tells you she's glad you are "such good friends"

→ She refuses to put her hand on your crotch no matter how much you beg

→ She says you're like a brother, which makes you have incest fantasies



→ She watches Adam Sandler movies with you

→ She asks for advice by starting with "You're a guy, right?"

→ She accidentally calls you "girlfriend" in conversation

→ She wants to know if you'll set her up with some of your "cute friends"

→ She's not afraid to take you to Neiman's to go shoe shopping

→ She lets you see her without her hair done, sans makeup

→ Her parents like you



Even after a hectic day as PCXL's Lifestyle Editor, Gia still has no trouble making new friends. We don't know how she does it.

women "chicks." It sure hasn't worked for any of my so-called co-workers. I mean having an opinion, a sense of humor, and confidence in yourself. Unfortunately, confidence is something you can't fake. If you're a sniveling girly-man who doesn't believe in himself, then women won't believe in you, either.

**HOW TO ESCAPE IT** → Stop being a wuss and get her stinking drunk — it worked on me once. You'd be

surprised how quickly a keg of beer, a bottle of tequila, and a vodka chaser can loosen up a gal. Like me and my girlfriends always say, "You can't be a stud if you won't get hammered." If that doesn't work, try a good round of plastic surgery or get filthy rich — there still isn't anything sexier than money, power, and devastating looks. Just look at Donald Trump. Okay, maybe you don't need to look ... two outta three ain't bad.

## "You can't be a stud if you won't get hammered."

**PLAYING THE ZONE** → Okay, there's no doubt about it — you're miserably stuck in the "Friend Zone." Now, I'm not one to turn on my own kind, but since you're going to need all the help you can get, here are a few tips to make the most of a bad deal.

→ Offer to give her an "honest opinion" from a man's perspective while she's trying on new outfits. If you play your cards right, you might get a peek and a peek's almost as good as a poke.

→ She may not be interested in you, but she probably has a friend who is. And if she has a friend who's interested in seeing you naked, then that's even better.

→ Set her up on blind dates with ugly, boring guys. Who knows, she might start to ask how she can meet a guy like you.

→ Tell her that you're gay. Women love unattainable men. The only danger is that she might set you up with one of her male friends.

→ Become roommates. The chance of seeing each other naked increases exponentially and togetherness just might lead to "between-the-sheet-edness." ▶

## NOW PLAYING

Here are a couple of recently released games that we couldn't quite squeeze into our Reviews section, so we're squeezing them in here instead.



### 21ST CENTURY SAILING SIMULATOR 2.0

Developer → 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
 Publisher → 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
 Release Date → Now  
 Price Check → This is sim with a capital S-I-M. Only for serious sailing fans, the graphics are minimal, using real photos and a slideshow technique to simulate movement. Aside from the single-player game, multiplayer support is a major new component to the series with serial, modem, LAN, and even Internet support. Potential Popeyes can find fellow sailors on The Zone. It's only sold on the web, so go to [www.21stcenturypublishing.com](http://www.21stcenturypublishing.com) for more info.

The guy on commission at your local software store says → "21<sup>st</sup> Century what? Umm ... lemme check ... sailing ... nope, don't see a listing. Hey, we've got Jet Moto 3 for the PlayStation on sale. Wouldn't you rather play that instead?"



### Y2K: THE GAME

Developer → Runicraft  
 Publisher → Interplay  
 Release Date → Now  
 Price Check → This is just like the real event — a big deal about nothing. It's a 3D graphic adventure in a computerized mansion that begins to go haywire at the stroke of midnight, New Year's Eve. The only Y2K glitch here is that Interplay released the game mere days before the real Y2K, depriving it of apocalyptic hysteria sales. The guy on commission at your local software store says → "Dude, it's got a red light on the side of the box. Do the guys who make Tiberium Sun care enough to put a light on the box? No sir ... because Interplay cares, man."

## IFREESTUFF!

... THAT WE'RE REALLY KINDA SCARED OF

It's an old story. Girl meets girl, girl kills girl, girl turns into vampire, hot lesbian vampire sex ensues for all eternity. All of the above can be found in *Vampyros Lesbos*, a cult flick described as "a psycho-sexadelic horror freak-out" about women eating other women (literally). Don May, Jr, the president of Synapse Films, sent us the flick, along with other obscure titles like *Brain Damage*, *Dario Argento's World of Horror*, and *Document of The Dead*. A PCXL fan, Don only asked that we send him Gia in return. Umm ... did you want her whole or in pieces? ▶



## ▶ PERV WATCH: THE TRUTH ABOUT SEX-CAMS

AS A SERVICE TO OUR PORN-LOVIN' READERS, AND A PERFECTLY GOOD REASON TO EXPENSE PORN FOR OURSELVES, PCKL TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SEXCAM CRAZE. WE WASTE OUR MONEY SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!

### JENNYCAM

**ADDRESS** → [www.jennycam.com](http://www.jennycam.com)

**WHAT IT IS** → The original SexCam that once featured a camera in Jenny's bedroom. She'd bring home guys, play with herself, and generally be a naughty little girl — and it was all free. Now the new JennyCam features the same Jenny (and she ain't that cute) without any of the Cam or naughtiness.

**WHAT YOU GET FOR FREE** → Nude picture gallery of Jenny (pre-boob job) and her huge schnozz (nose job needed)

**MEMBERSHIP PRICE** → \$3.98/day, \$19.98/month, \$119.98/year

**WHAT THEY PROMISE** → Hundreds of her XXX pics — with girl-friends, thousands of live feeds and streaming videos

**WHAT YOU ACTUALLY GET** → More pictures of Jenny showing off her pet beaver, but absolutely no sign of the infamous JennyCam. There are live feeds available under the categories of Guys, Girls, Asians, Teens, Dungeon (not the RPG kind), Trans, and Hardcore. However "streaming" and "live" are two words we wouldn't use to describe them. In fact we waited 20 minutes and still had nothing to satisfy our heathen urges.



**MOST INTERESTING PARTS** →

"Me & Sonic" — we were shocked that there were absolutely no blue hedgehogs in this photo collection, however there were plenty of "tails."  
"My New Tits" — Apparently Jenny used her income from JennyCam to get an upgrade in the breast department

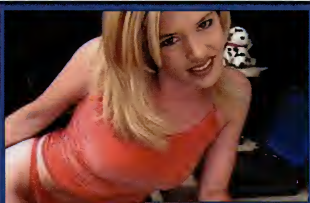
**OUR E-MAIL TO JENNY** →

"Great new breasts, but when are you going to take care of that nose and those horrible freckles!"

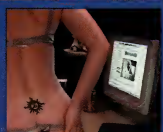
**PERV VALUE** → Why buy the cow when you're getting the proverbial milk for free? JennyCam's preview pics are just as revealing as anything inside, so why bother? It's a complete rip-off, and there's no damn JennyCam — it should be called JennyPics. For \$3.98 a day you can take up smoking and you'll be better off.



We can rebuild her. Make her faster, stronger, larger in the breast area. But we can't make her better looking. Damn it!



Tiffany likes to show off her laptop, as well as her top-top and ass-top. All in all, we think she's in tit-top shape.



### TIFFANYCAM

**ADDRESS** → [www.tiffanycam.com](http://www.tiffanycam.com)

**WHAT IT IS** → A complete rip-off of the original JennyCam. TiffanyCam features live pictures every 60 seconds. However TiffanyCam isn't a peek into Tiffany's daily activities (unless Tiffany strips all day and plays with handcuffs), it's more of a 24-hour strip tease.

**WHAT YOU GET FOR FREE** → Scantily-clad pics of Tiffany and the last three live pictures from her cam. We have yet to see any nudity, but Tiffany is a little hottie.

**MEMBERSHIP PRICE** → \$10/month (renews automatically unless you cancel)

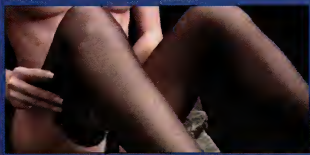
**WHAT THEY PROMISE** → 14,000 images, 20 sound files (for aural sex), hi-bandwidth cam, MPEG video clips, and Tiffany Naked

**WHAT YOU ACTUALLY GET** → Pretty much everything promised, although the hi-bandwidth cam only updates every 60 seconds and the quality is crap.

**MOST INTERESTING PARTS** → "Tiffany's Journal" — Each day the star of the site writes a message to her readers describing how once again she is just sooo horny.

"Tiffany Naked" — Unlike Jenny, Tiffany is extremely attractive and someone we actually enjoyed seeing naked

**PERV VALUE** → If you really want to see Tiffany naked, then this site delivers. However the quality of live feeds and difficulty in canceling your bill still make this a waste of money. You get the basic idea from the free pics and only the saddest of perverts (or most devoted Tiffany-ite) would waste \$10/month on this.



## VOYEURDORM

ADDRESS → [www.voyeurdorm.com](http://www.voyeurdorm.com)

**WHAT IT IS** → The much-hyped site which features seven college girls "experimenting" and covorting around a house full of webcams. The fact that none of these girls are actually in college doesn't really bother us, but the quality of women and amount of action is disturbingly low.

**WHAT YOU GET FOR FREE** → Fully-clothed (and low res) pics of the girls and a video clip (of poor quality, and with too many clothes) of each girl.

**MEMBERSHIP PRICE** → \$34/month, \$90/year

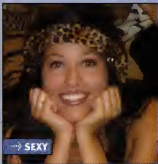
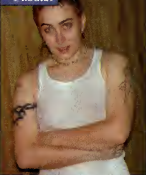
**WHAT THEY PROMISE** → Seven Women, 48 Cameras, 24 hours. You can watch them shower, sleep, party, work out, study, and watch chick flicks.

**WHAT YOU ACTUALLY GET** → Find The Softcore Porn — an adventure game where you try to locate the camera which has "the action." After several hours of "research," we did manage to see a shower and a really nasty girl-kissing-girl moment (see pictures below for why said kiss is nasty). The quality of video and updates are the best around, but it is still far from "Real World with nudity" that they promise.

**PERV VALUE** → The concept is brilliant, but in reality it's a waste of time and money. Get the Spice Channel, you'll be much happier.

## → MEET THE SEVEN DWARVES OF VOYEURDORM

→ MANLY



→ SEXY

→ SASSY



→ HOTTY

→ DYKEY



→ TRANNY



→ NASTY

**FINAL ANALYSIS** → Back in the day, Cam sites were a free, unfettered expression of a woman's desire to show off her body to the Internet masses. 'Twas a thing of beauty, really. Now, it's all about greed, deception, and pre-packaged nude shots of girls you wouldn't pay to see naked in the first place. We aren't surprised they're completely crappy, but someone had to check them out, just to make sure.

## GAME KILLER

## BOY BAND BUTCHERY: OUT O' SYNC DESTROYS ULTIMA ASCENSION

**WANTED:** Creepy Svinggill-like manager to coach group of slightly over-the-hill and out-of-tune male vocalists. Talents include: Ripping on bad games, destroying bad games in new and unusual ways, going for cheap laughs. If interested, contact Out O' Sync in care of Mike "Lead Singer Cut 'I'm Da Preilly Boy" Salimon.

## CHORUS

Tell me why  
Took over five years to make  
Tell me why  
DxD chugs like Ricki Lake  
Tell me why  
I never wanna hear you say  
I'll play it that way

Am I your tester  
Your beta jester  
You know we're the boys from  
Out O' Sync  
But I'll play it that way

CHORUS - repeat

**H**ere's a sample of our new hit, dedicated to *Ultima Ascension* ...

"I'll Play It That Way"  
(Sung to the tune  
"I Want It That Way")

You raised my ire  
*Ultima* liar  
Makin' me haveta say  
I'll play it that way

Bug patches are the easy part  
Nothin' patches a broken heart  
When you say I'll play it that way

Now I can see that we've fallen apart  
From the way that it used to be,  
yeah  
No matter the annoyance  
I want you to know that  
Deep down inside of me

I'll set you on fire  
Funeral pyre  
Bad bugs, bad bugs, bad bugs,  
bad bugs  
Don't wanna hear you say ...

You'll only need an Intel PIII  
Don't need no KB from AMD  
Those lies that you say  
I never wanna hear you say  
I'll play it that way

CHORUS



## DEVELOPER SPOTLIGHT

## Digital Anvil Is No Loose Cannon

**O**n the shadow of the great state of Texas' capitol building in downtown Austin lies the not-so-humble headquarters of Digital Anvil. Started by a pack of ex-Origin-ites led by *Wing Commander*-creator Chris Roberts in 1996, the company's first major endeavor was the *Wing Commander* movie (though we'll try not to hold that against them, difficult as it may be).

Today, Digital Anvil's focus has moved back to games, with several highly anticipated releases in 2000 such as *Starlancer*, *Loose Cannon*, and the game judged by many as the best of show at last year's E3, *Freelancer*. It's all to be published by some tiny little company headquartered up in Seattle called Microsoft.

So where does a cutting-edge development house set up shop, anyway? In the WB Smith Building, a 116-year old bona fide historical building nine blocks from the state capitol, and less than three blocks from Austin's live music and entertainment center, Sixth Street. Set-

ting into a space built in 1884 with its original limestone walls still intact presented a unique challenge for a wired company, which they creatively solved using steel mesh shelving and high ceilings. And because the previous tenant was an interior design company, the office has a cool, metallic art deco look, a dramatic contrast from its old-fashioned exterior.

An on-site sound studio, used for some of the mixing on the *Wing Commander* movie, and a Dolby surround-sound theater lets you know that Digital Anvil definitely doesn't think small.

In fact, Digital Anvil has grown so quickly over the past few years that their current space won't hold all of its 95 employees, so a second Austin office has recently been opened.

When they're not busy working on games, Digital Anvil staffers head out for a brew at one of the many surrounding bars, play ping-pong in the rec room, watch movies, play video games in the theater, or sleep on their very own private futon. As long as all those distractions don't make 'em forget about finishing *Freelancer*, the year 2000 is destined to be the year of Digital Anvil. ➔



If we had all the cool stuff that Digital Anvil's got locked away in here, we'd hide it in some old building, too. Looks are deceiving.

## STATUS

NUMBER OF MOVIE THEATERS IN OFFICE → 1

NUMBER OF SEATS IN MOVIE THEATER → 32

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES → 95

PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES WHO CAN WATCH A MOVIE AT ONE TIME: 1/3

NUMBER OF LIFE-SIZE KILRATHI FIGURES IN LOBBY → 1

NUMBER OF JAR-JAR PICTURES IN THE LOOSE CANNON DESIGN OFFICE → 4

NUMBER OF TIMES WE ASKED WHY THE HELL JAR-JAR WAS IN THE OFFICE → 1

NUMBER OF TIMES WE WERE ASKED BACK TO THE OFFICE → 0

## PCXL QUOTES

"I'M A HUMAN FLESH-EATING MOTHERF\*\*\*KER IF YOU MESS WITH ME."

— Matt "Newguy" Holmes on his chances in a fight

"I LIKE IT IN THE REAR. THAT'S WHERE IT GOES. THAT'S WHERE I LIKE IT."

— Mike Salmon discussing the placement of PCXL's X-TRA section

"I'M TOTALLY INTO BONDAGE — THAT'S WHAT'S NEXT."

— Gio DeCarlo discussing the topic of her next column

"YOU CAN MAKE IT LONGER BY PULLING THESE THINGS OUT."

— Kyle LeBoeuf talking about the proper use of a tripod

"I'M JUST PISSED BECAUSE I'M NOT A WOMAN."

— Matt "Newguy" Holmes, but we don't know why

"MY CELL PHONE IS SO OLD, IT'S GOT A ROTARY DIAL."

— Gerry Serrano talking about needing to upgrade his phone



"Did you reach your milestone today? Answer me, human!"



Believe it or not, this isn't a cutscene. *Freelancer* is going to be one of the "purtiest" games released this year.

## FEEDBACK

letters@pctl.com



→ Feedback's even more controversial than usual this month. Between outrage over *Quake III* being awarded Game Of The Year to outrage over outraged parents, our e-mail sack runneth over with rage. Seems our readers agree one thing: Gia's got a great butt. So, the next time you get offended or think we have sold out to "the man," picture Gia's ass and your worries will slip away.

## Q3 VS UT

I almost did it. I almost threw PCXL in the trash when I saw you had decided on *Quake III* as game of the year. Game of the Year? For what? No new modes of play (unlike *Unreal Tournament*), the weapons are the same-old same-old, and the Bot "AI" frankly sucks. "... the addition of intelligent bots ..." Where? I didn't see any intelligence, just entities that move faster and are more accurate than (most) humans. If you've noticed, they seem to have a problem going up, and thus most matches end up with you parked on the higher levels, raining rockets of death on them. Like shooting fish in a barrel. As far as CTF goes, I've seen novices that play better than Q3's bots do. UT's bots "feel" and act far more intelligent and certainly play the alternative modes better.

My opinion — I think you guys deserve the "Golden Crack Pipe" award for awarding *Quake III* Game of the Year. UT is the game I'll be playing a year from now.

Larry Mosley

Larry wasn't alone in being so obviously, tragically wrong, as we quickly learned.

Your Game of the Year announcement was as surprising as Thresh's Firing Squad ranking Q3 higher than UT. Wow! What a surprise. Maybe one day id will stop getting the preferential treatment that they have always received. Keep up the good work (on everything but being John Carmack's pimp) and give the new guy a raise. Obviously he's the only one who hasn't been corrupted yet.

Paul Mancine

Just for the record, Matt was corrupted long before he started at PCXL.

Let me start by saying you guys suck. How could you honestly



give Q3 the Game of the Year award over *Unreal Tournament* and be able to sleep at night? F\*\*king sell-outs! One more question: Do you guys even play the games?

JACKASSES!!!!

P.S. Gia's got a GREAT ass. I LOVE IT!!!

Darren

We've got news for you — Gia's ass plays *Quake III*.

... I must say you guys have gone to every extent possible not to hurt or damage the saintly image of id and their sucky Q3A ...

Storm

Wrong

... as slaves to id (the company and the Freudian pleasure center of the personality), Q3 is a natural choice for PCXL's Game of the Year ...

Mark

Half-Wrong

I can't believe it! The same people that I trusted deeply actually gave *Quake III* Game of the Year! Have you all lost it?!

Kyle

Virginity, yes. Minds, no.

Your giving *Quake III* a perfect 50, then NAMING IT GAME OF THE YEAR makes it so blatant that you are on crack. *Unreal Tournament* has every mode that *Quake III* has and more.

Adam

It was a tough decision, but the more both games are played, the more we realize we were spot-on with our assessment. PCXL isn't in anybody's back pocket, and that includes id. Like we said last issue, *Unreal Tournament* is a fantastic game, just not as much fun as *Quake III*, in our humble (and always right) opinion.

## FUNNY SHIT

Just got out of my office (the bathroom) trying to "give birth" while reading the newest issue of PCXL. I was having a serious hard time straining to get it out when I started reading the article on Online Nuisance for AOE II. When I got to the quote "I have the sheep, now surrender before I unleash them," the sh\$# exploded right out of me! So I want to thank you guys for relieving me in my time of need. By the way, I love the magazine, keep up the great work.

Todd B.

You're welcome, but maybe it would be best if you don't read PCXL in public from now on.

## OUR READERS VS THE PEOPLE

I would like to comment on that frickin' schmuck's letter in the Feb 2000 issue (the one entitled "The People vs. PCXL"). Okay dad, listen up, this mag has nothing but bikini-clad babes in it, and I guarantee that is the tamest "porn" that your son has seen. I can tell you that most kids see their first full-length, hardcore porn by age 13. I saw my first at 12. It is also a fact that if you give a teenage kid internet access, porn of all kinds will wind up on that computer screen. You will be lucky if your kid isn't into bestiality, never mind freakin' chicks in bikinis! It is also a fact that one out of every three to five kids have done drugs, so there's a good chance that your son is on something. So in closing, your son is an animal-sex lovin' crack addict, and you are worried about girls in bathing suits. PCXL rocks and it is stiffs like you, sir, that are a waste of life and a bog on the economy and legal system.

Good day.

Kevin G.

When you put it like that, how could you afford NOT to let your kids read a wholesome magazine like PCXL? Read on ...

Q3A = Perfectly balanced levels, weapons, tactics, and fun.  
UT = Conceptual design, game modes, no character personality.





# Gaming 411

These sponsors make it possible for PC ACCELERATOR to exist. Without them we'd just be a bunch of loud-mouthed fools. We appreciate their advertising, but if they make a game that sucks, we WILL kill it. Nobody owns PCXL, but PCXL

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## ADVERTISER INDEX

COMPANY	PRODUCT	PAGE #	INFO #
Aberdeen	Hardware	138-139	---
Action Software	Adult DVD	---	---
Activision	Soldier of Fortune	14-15	89
Affiliations	Yahoo	98	---
Alienware	Ultimate Gaming Machine	70	14
Aureal, Inc.	Vortex	52	20

Creative Labs	Feel The Rush	bc	21
Dell Computer	Systems	IBC	126
EA / Westwood Studios	NOX	20-21	46
Eidos Interactive	Branding	lfc	26
Eidos Interactive	Thief 2	8-9	25
Electronic Arts / Origin	The Sims	62-63	90
Fox Interactive	Die Hard Trilogy 2	36-37	138
GT Interactive	Unreal Tournament	6-7	69
GT Interactive	Imperium Galactica II	47	27
Imagine Media	<a href="http://www.dailyradar.com">www.dailyradar.com</a>	104-105	---
Imagine Media	Tricom Pictures	42	---
Interplay Productions	MDK2	40-41	146
Interplay Productions	Evolve	13	149
Interplay Productions	Icewind Dale	2-3	150
Interplay Productions	Klingon Academy	92-93	60
Interplay Productions	Baldur's Gate 2	88-89	151
Interplay Productions	Messiah	78-79	93
Lucas Arts	Force Commander	58-59	72
Microsoft	Starlancer	30-31	62
pcgr.com	<a href="http://www.pcgr.com">www.pcgr.com</a>	85	---
Psygnosis	Metal Fatigue	74-75	39
Razer	Boomslang Mouse	64-65	119
SegaSoft	<a href="http://www.heat.net">www.heat.net</a>	39	120
SquareSoft	Final Fantasy 8	11	139
Talonssoft	Code Name Eagle	16	107
The 3DO Company	Army Men- World War	25	---
The 3DO Company	Army Men- World War	27	---
The 3DO Company	HIGH HEAT 2001	48-49	83

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"Whatever you can do or dream, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."

-- Goethe

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Asus P5A	MB170	ALU AB250	512	384	3	Award	UltraDMA66	5	2	1	ATX	1Yr	385	\$130	\$102	\$121	\$226	\$181	\$234	\$141
Asus P5A-B	MB170	ALU AB250	512	384	3	Award	UltraDMA66	5	2	1	Baby AT	1Yr	397	\$154	\$162	\$182	\$227	\$182	\$235	\$142
EPoX EP-MPP2C	MS406	VIA Apollo MP53	512	384	3	Award	UltraDMA66	4	2	1	Baby AT	2 Yrs	352	\$139	\$149	\$167	\$212	\$167	\$240	\$147
EPoX EP-MPP2S	MS406	VIA Apollo MP53	2048	384	3	Award	UltraDMA66	5	2	1	ATX	2 Yrs	358	\$159	\$174	\$192	\$229	\$193	\$299	\$155
EPoX EP-MPP4A	MS403	VIA Apollo MP53	512	384	3	Award	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	2 Yrs	359	\$148	\$158	\$174	\$213	\$174	\$217	\$154
PC PA-2015 (2MB CG)	MB214	VIA Apollo MP53	2048	384	3	Award	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	1Yr	352	\$152	\$169	\$187	\$232	\$187	\$262	\$147
PC PA-2130	MB215	VIA Apollo MP53	1024	384	3	Award	ESB UltraDMA66	4	1	1	Mini-ATX	1 Yr	305	\$125	\$161	\$180	\$225	\$181	\$263	\$140
PC VA-230	MB217	VIA Apollo MP53	1024	512	4	Award	ESB UltraDMA66	3	3	1	Baby AT	1 Yr	378	\$154	\$163	\$200	\$163	\$236	\$125	
PC VA-202A	MB218	VIA Apollo MP53	1024	768	3	Award	ESB UltraDMA66	4	1	1	Baby AT	1 Yr	366	\$143	\$152	\$171	\$218	\$171	\$244	\$131
Shuttle HOT-GOIP	MB211	VIA Apollo MP53	512	256	2	Award	ESB UltraDMA66	3	3	1	Baby AT	1 Yr	377	\$134	\$143	\$162	\$207	\$162	\$233	\$132
Tyan S1505 Trinity 100AT	MB206	VIA Apollo MP53	1024	384	3	Award	AC-97	4	1	1	Mini AT	3 Yrs	355	\$152	\$161	\$180	\$225	\$180	\$273	\$140
Tyan S1596 Trinity ATX	MB205	VIA Apollo MP53	2048	384	3	Award	UltraDMA66	5	2	1	ATX	3 Yrs	\$120	\$137	\$186	\$205	\$250	\$185	\$278	\$150

### Slot A

Part Number	Chip Set	Max. Memory	100-pin DIMM Sockets	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	System Frequency	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Form Factor	Manufacturer's Warranty	Manufacturer Only	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor
Asus K7M	MB270	AMD-751 VIA 850A	768	3	Award	100/133MHz	UltraDMA66	5	1	1	ATX	1Yr	\$179	\$419	\$454	\$509	\$734	\$554	\$559
PC S015	MB247	AMD-751 VIA 850A	768	3	Award	100/133MHz	UltraDMA66	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$159	\$159	\$164	\$169	\$164	\$169	\$164
GVC C750	MB261	AMD-750	768	3	Award	100	UltraDMA66	4	3	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$134	\$274	\$409	\$464	\$599	\$509	\$754
Microlin MS-617	MB230	AMD-730	768	3	Award	100	UltraDMA66	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$184	\$404	\$439	\$494	\$719	\$503	\$1084

### Socket 370

Part Number	Chip Set	Max. Memory	100-pin DIMM Sockets	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	System Frequency	Integrated Audio	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Form Factor	Manufacturer's Warranty	Manufacturer Only	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	
ABIT BK6	MS654	Intel 4X45X	768	3	Award	500	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$111	\$204	\$233	\$272	\$311	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
ABIT DPG (Dual)	MS658	Intel 4X45X	768	3	Award	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$143	\$236	\$265	\$308	\$343	\$543	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
EPoX EP-824 (DVCA)	MS484	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award	AC-97	4	1	1	ATX	2 Yrs	\$119	\$212	\$241	\$284	\$319	N/A	\$159	\$414	\$629	\$624
SuperMicro 370EA	MS410	Intel P100	512	2	AMI	Intel P100	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$133	\$228	\$259	\$309	\$333	N/A	\$373	\$428	\$543	\$638
SuperMicro 370SD	MS410	Intel P100	512	2	AMI	Intel P100	5	1	1	Mini-ATX	1 Yr	\$119	\$211	\$241	\$284	\$319	N/A	\$354	N/A	\$454	\$628
Tyan S1857 Trinity 271	MS807	Intel 4X45X	768	3	Award	6	1	1	ATX	3 Yrs	\$104	\$122	\$228	\$269	\$304	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Tyan S1864 Trinity 400	MS810	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award	6	1	1	ATX	3 Yrs	\$107	\$200	\$229	\$272	\$307	N/A	\$347	\$402	\$517	\$612	

### Slot 1

Part Number	Chip Set	Max. Memory	100-pin DIMM Sockets	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	System Frequency	Integrated Audio	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Form Factor	Manufacturer's Warranty	Manufacturer Only	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor
ABIT BE6-B	MS650	Intel 4X45X	768	3	Award	500	5	1	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$140	N/A	\$136	\$443	\$533	N/A	\$653	N/A	\$758
ABIT V46	MS652	Intel 4X45X	768	3	Award	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$119	N/A	\$359	\$414	\$504	N/A	\$624	N/A	\$759
Asus P8B8-D5	MS659	VIA Apollo Pro 133	768	3	Award	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$89	\$324	\$329	\$384	\$474	\$499	\$529	\$639	N/A
Asus P8B-B	MS674	Intel 4X45X	1024	4	Award	AC-97	4	2	1	Baby AT	1 Yr	\$138	N/A	\$378	\$433	\$523	N/A	\$643	N/A	\$778
Asus P8B-F	MS672	Intel 4X45X	1024	4	Award	6	1	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$143	N/A	\$385	\$440	\$530	N/A	\$650	N/A	\$785	
Asus PC1600	MS672	Intel 820	1024	4	Award	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$188	\$423	\$428	\$483	\$573	\$598	\$699	\$729	\$828
EPoX EP-928A2	MS680	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	3 Yrs	\$114	\$274	\$338	\$414	\$504	\$529	\$624	\$669	\$769
PC K11	MS681	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	1024	4	Award	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$100	\$330	\$340	\$395	\$485	\$510	\$600	\$650	\$740
Intel C680	MS689	Intel 820	512	2	AMI/Phoenix	UltraDMA66	5	1	ATX	3 Yrs	\$150	\$385	\$390	\$445	\$535	\$650	\$665	\$700	\$790	
Intel SE498X-2 'Seattle'	MS692	Intel 4X45X	768	3	AMI/Phoenix	UltraDMA66	4	2	1	ATX	3 Yrs	\$144	N/A	\$384	\$439	\$529	N/A	\$649	N/A	\$784
Shuttle AV81	MS693	VIA Apollo Pro 133	768	3	Award	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$82	\$315	\$320	\$375	\$465	\$490	\$585	\$630	\$720
SuperMicro P8B2C	MS614E	Intel 820	512	2	AMI	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$133	\$336	\$331	\$446	\$531	\$646	\$171	\$191	\$241
SuperMicro P8B2D	MS614E	Intel 820	512	2	AMI	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$129	\$324	\$329	\$444	\$514	\$629	\$634	\$679	\$919
SuperMicro P8B2E	MS615F	Intel 820	4096	6	AMI	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$229	\$554	\$641	\$824	\$1041	\$1278	\$1481	\$1681	\$2131
SuperMicro P8B2F	MS6129	Intel 4X45X	2048	4	AMI	Adaptive LZW	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$92	\$314	\$319	\$424	\$514	\$624	\$624	\$679	\$929
SuperMicro P8B2G	MS6122	Intel 4X45X	2048	4	AMI	Adaptive LZW	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$89	\$304	\$309	\$414	\$504	\$614	\$614	\$669	\$919
SuperMicro P8B2A	MS6120	Intel 4X45X	1024	4	AMI	Adaptive LZW	4	3	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$103	N/A	\$343	\$388	\$488	N/A	\$608	N/A	\$743
SuperMicro P8B2U	MS6128	Intel 4X45X	1024	4	AMI	Adaptive LZW	4	3	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$109	N/A	\$359	\$404	\$504	N/A	\$624	N/A	\$759
Tyan S1857 Trinity 371	MS691	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$104	N/A	\$344	\$399	\$499	N/A	\$619	N/A	\$754
Tyan S1864 Trinity 400	MS691A	VIA Apollo Pro 133A	768	3	Award	UltraDMA66	6	1	1	ATX	3 Yrs	\$107	\$342	\$347	\$452	\$542	\$652	\$117	\$162	\$217

### Slot 2

Part Number	Chip Set	Max. Memory	100-pin DIMM Sockets	168-pin DIMM Sockets	Flash BIOS	System Frequency	Integrated Audio	Integrated Controller	PCI Slots	ISA Slots	AGP Slot	Form Factor	Manufacturer's Warranty	Manufacturer Only	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor	W/AMD Athlon™ Processor
Asus M2Plex II	MS623	Intel 520EX	800	1	AMI	200	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$109	\$200	\$205	\$230	\$235	\$265	\$270	\$275	\$280	\$285
Asus XG-DL5	MS673	Intel 4X45X	2048	4	AMI	200	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$169	\$319	\$324	\$349	\$354	\$384	\$389	\$394	\$404	\$409
SuperMicro S2DM3	MS6130	Intel 820	4096	6	AMI	AC-97	4	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$101	\$341	\$346	\$371	\$401	\$431	\$461	\$491	\$521
SuperMicro S2DQ2	MS6136	Intel 4X45X	2048	4	AMI	Adaptive 2-Ch LZW	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$249	\$1649	\$2149	\$2649	\$2749	\$2949	\$3049	\$3149	\$3249
SuperMicro S2DQ6	MS6139	Intel 4X45X	2048	4	AMI	Adaptive 2-Ch LZW	5	2	1	ATX	1 Yr	\$249	\$1649	\$2149	\$2649	\$2749	\$2949	\$3049	\$3149	\$3249



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# FIRST PERSON

## Voice chat in games: Who needs it?

I'm madder than a militant mime in a megaphone factory over all the nonsense I've been hearing about how realtime voice communication is going to revolutionize online multiplayer games. Sure, it may seem like fun — Imagine creeping down a hallway in *Team Fortress*, shouting out commands to your unit, awash in the fantasy that you're an anti-terrorist expert about to take down an evil fascist dictator, when at that moment some 12-year old pre-pubescent brat named "Dethlord!" screeches "frag dat beevatch, glock glock."

To put it simply, a major part of gameplay is illusion. It's the sense that you're actually doing what's going on onscreen that makes modern PC games so engrossing. And I'm not saying that group interaction isn't a large part of that — far from it. But what I am saying is that W.C. Fields hit the nail on the head when he said "children are better off seen and not heard." In this case, "children" refers to anybody who uses more punctuation than their *Quake* handle than they'd use in an essay. Hey, if you want to call yourself *Apocolypso* Deathmonger, go right ahead. Just don't expect anybody to take you



Run Bitch! I said Run!

seriously, much less want to hear you nasally-ass, whiny, prattle assault their eardrums. As I'm sure Rob "that's not crack, that's powdered sugar" Smith will argue, voice communication can, if used properly, add a lot to multiplayer games. *Tribes* brought the PCXL office for as long as it did because we could all hear each other, strategizing and cheering our many victories over the less-organized masses. We were also all playing on a LAN in the office and had no illusions that "PCXL — DeadMeat" (me) was an other-worldly, ultimate fighting machine, but just some goofy hick from Texas. The real test is, would we have used voice chat if we weren't all in the same room together? The answer: Probably not. I know I sure wouldn't, and it's not just because realtime streaming audio would slow down most existing connections. Group game chat is like a massively multiplayer conference call where confusion over who said what could get you virtually killed.

But most of all, the reason I'll never use in-game chat is because it's yet another useless layer of technology added to games that don't need it. *Team Fortress 2*? Okay, maybe, if you know the guys on your team. But in *Quake III* deathmatch? Not on your life, buddy! There's only so many times I can tolerate hearing "You suck!" yelled in my ear and that threshold is usually exhausted by lunchtime.

— CHUCK "JUST SHUT THE HELL UP" OSBORN

# SECOND PERSON

Well, well, Mr Anti-Social, pooping on the notion of enhancing the game experience is exactly what we'd expect from a hardcore gaming magazine editor! Congratulations in your efforts to stifle advancements and creativity in our industry. Voice communication software such as Roger Wilco barely hits the game speed if you're running a PII 266 or higher. The benefit is incredible if you're well organized, and that's the key. Brazenly ragging on the technology is luddite behavior when it's the application of the technology that your snootiness disdains. In any team-based game, where teammates are committed to working together in a serious, but enthralling encounter, voice communication will take you on to the battlefield, rather than just be a witness to its events. C'mon, Chuck, I expected more than this damning level of ignorance, not to mention the obvious sluttishness of your myopia. How about this, get some friends and then you might see the positive side. Oh, sorry, you don't have any. Loser.

— ROB "EVERYONE IS MY FRIEND" SMITH

# NEXT MONTH?

## FIGHT NIGHT

These two have been pumping iron (and lead) in preparation for the final showdown. We have in one corner, the finely honed deathmatch machine — *Quake 3 Arena*. In the other, the multitalented online fighter *Unreal Tournament*. Who gets the belt and who gets the boot? PCXL takes a closer look at this behemoth battle.

MAKING SNOW ANGELS IN HELL: DAIKATANA

- **WARCRAFT 3**  
Humans and Orcs weren't enough for Blizzard. Oh no, they had to go and throw three new races into the mix, and we got the scoop on the newest.
- **ROB'S NOGGIN = YOUR PINATA**  
We crack his crackled noodle and spill all the sweet candy of the gaming industry into the high cholesterol pages of *PC Accelerator*.
- **MAKING SNOW ANGELS IN HELL**  
The *Daikatana* review. Really. We mean it this time. We think.
- **AND A FULLY PACKED BEVE OF BEAUTIES**  
We stuffed this one as full as a ... um, well it's full!



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